

THE VALUE OF AWARENESS: BIBLICAL YOUTH CARE AND
COUNSELING TO CROSS CULTURE AMONG THE AMERICAN
MYANMAR COMMUNITY

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ABSTRACT

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by
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The project context was the American Mission Church in Fort Worth, in Texas. It is entitled “Biblical Youth Care and Counseling to Cross Culture Among the American Myanmar Community.” There are cross-cultural issues that cause conflict in my community because we migrated to the United States as refugees from the country Myanmar. My hypothesis is that if the members of the American Myanmar Mission Church are exposed to pastoral care and counseling practices, then they will be equipped to identify the cross-cultural problems. The research methodology was qualitative analysis in nature using interviews, storytelling, and observations to prove the hypothesis.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Praise the Lord, the God Almighty, who enabled me to study at the United Theological Seminary (UTS) when there is a political issue in my country, Myanmar. I express my heartfelt thanks UTS for accepting me as an international student. If I had not been accepted my life would be in the dark age of Myanmar.

The completion of this research is impossible because of my mentors Dr. Jonathan McReynolds and Dr. Anita Coleman. This is the result of their guidance, corrections, advice, and encouragement throughout my doctoral studies at United Theological Seminary. I am also grateful for my faculty consultant Dr. Reggie Abraham who adds value to my study journey at UTS. I acknowledge my previous mentors Dr. Thomas L. Francis and Dr. Sharon Ellis Davis, and my faculty consultant Dr. Jerome Stevenson who laid the foundation of my project studies.

I would also like to acknowledge God's given parents my dad, Lan Za Thang, and mom, Sang Men, for their love and endless prayers of support. Finally, I would like to thank all my financial helpers for their kind giving.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this research study to my wife, Thawng Tial Mawi, and my beloved son Aaron Thang. I also extend my dedication to the American Myanmar community in the United States.

INTRODUCTION

My doctoral project is “Biblical Youth Care and Counseling to Cross Culture Among the American Myanmar Community.” The context of my project is the American Myanmar Mission Church in Fort Worth, Texas. By discovering the American Myanmar Mission Church (AMMC), there are three generations within the community. They are: (1) so-called first generation, parents, who came from native land Myanmar; (2) second-generation, who were born in Myanmar but grew up in the United States; (3) third generation were born in the United States, but they do not understand the life story of the native land. Due to the generation transition period, there are big gaps and misunderstandings within the American Myanmar Mission Church. They hurt each other knowingly or unknowingly in their daily lives. Therefore, there will be three groups of participants in my project, such as parents, youth, (fourteen to twenty-five) and the ministers who are serving the church.

Firstly, in order to figure out the cultural problems in the community, I dealt with the parents. Most of the American Myanmar parents immigrated in the United States without knowing what they were going to experience in the country. Refugee life is not comfortable for everybody; instead, it is painful and bitterness life situation. Specially, Myanmar refugee parents landed in the United States with fear and insecurity. Psychologically, most of the parents were experiencing mental illness. Therefore, I conducted the parent meeting in the American Myanmar Mission Church. I invited

women to the first parent's meeting. The second meeting was only men (fathers). The third meeting was for both parents. I conducted the parents meeting with a PowerPoint presentation. By taking the meeting, I was able to discover both negative and positive life situations as well as cultural effects. The results helped me to understand where I must begin to do counseling to youth.

Secondly, AMMC's youth were involved in the doctoral project. They are my targeted audience to provide biblical youth care and counseling. They are the group of second-generation who were born in the native land of Myanmar and brought up in the United States. Since they are the middle generation, they are experiencing most of life's struggle in school, family, as well as the church. Some of the youths are facing challenges, difficulties in their educational journey. The challenges are because they began their studies from the high school level in the United States school system and they have been educated in Myanmar educational system through grade and middle school. Some are not able to go to school because they are over eighteen when they arrived in the United States. Therefore, it is very clear that they went through a bitter life situation that is unseen by the community.

This project is divided into six chapters. Chapter one dealt with ministry focus based on my spiritual biography. Chapter one presented the connection between my spiritual autobiography and contextual analysis with the expectation of bringing out my Doctor of Ministry project. The second chapter is the biblical foundations. The chosen text is Esther 4:1-17. This biblical exegesis highlights Mordecai and Esther as the model of a cross-culture community. Mordecai gave care and counseling to Esther to gain a royal position. Mordecai represents the life of the first generation in the foreign land and

one could see Esther as part of the second generation in a cross-cultural community. Mordecai and Esther stood together in the cross-cultural kingdom where they were confronted with difficulties, problems, crises, misunderstanding, jealousy, and challenges in their daily lives. They became successful leaders for the people of God in the Persian Empire.

The third chapter expresses the historical foundations. This chapter engaged the historical figure Adoniram Judson and the Adoniram Judson missionary movement to support this doctoral project. This historical figure was divided into five parts including Adoniram Judson's family background, Adoniram Judson's transformation until he became one of the missionaries in the foreign land, Adoniram Judson's first missionary journey to India, and Adoniram Judson's missionary movement in Myanmar. The fifth part summarized the foreign missionaries in Myanmar because Adoniram Judson remained the model of foreign missionaries in Myanmar today.

The fourth chapter presents information on the theological foundations. This chapter presents the primary concerns of Minjung Theology. It introduces the background of the minjung movement in South Korea, the minjung language, political background, religious background, and the rise of the minjung movement. It will also present a critique of the Minjung Theology because there is weakness and strength in every theology. Finally, the summary focuses on how the minjung theological movements, and their theologies are foundational to this doctoral project.

Chapter five explores the interdisciplinary foundations. The field of study for this interdisciplinary foundation is the psychology of coaching, mentoring, and learning theory for this doctoral project, entitled, "Biblical Youth Care and Counseling to Cross

Culture Among the American Myanmar Community.” Dr. Ho Law is the person who put together coaching, mentoring, and learning in the study field of psychology by writing *The Psychology of Coaching, Mentoring, and Learning*. The first part introduces the psychology of coaching, mentoring, and learning. The second part present how the psychology of coaching, mentoring, and learning is foundational for this interdisciplinary research, interacts with the project themes for the biblical, historical, and theological foundation chapters.

Finally, the chapter six provides a critical analysis of the Doctor of Ministry research project on “Biblical Youth Care and Counseling to Cross Culture Among the American Myanmar Community.” Culture is anything that humans produce when they interact with each other and with God’s creation. We produce culture, and at the same time our cultural context shapes us, affecting who we are, what we think and do, and how we feel.¹ It presents the methodology, implementation, demographics, pre- and post-survey questions, feedback, journey writing, workshops, conclusion, and a summary of learning on the project.

¹ Bruce Riley Ashford, *Every Square Inch: An Introduction to Cultural Engagement for Christians* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2015), 13.

CHAPTER ONE

MINISTRY FOCUS

The God of Israel speaks throughout history. God speaks to the group (congregation) as well as to individuals in private. God speaks to me through God's Word (the Bible), through the Holy Spirit, and through my daily experiences. God is above the culture and in the culture. God speaks to human beings according to their communities. Sometimes, culture covers the word of God or the gospel and brings misunderstanding in the community.

So, I intend to explore through my Doctor of Ministry project the topic of "Biblical Youth Care and Counseling to Cross Culture Among the American Myanmar Community." One of the main issues that arises in my context is a cross-cultural misunderstanding because first-generation persons brought the culture of Myanmar, but second-generation youth grow up in this country. Barriers exist because of their communication language differences, body language, feelings, emotions, form of address, ethnocentrism, and family food. Most especially, the language barrier affects the American Myanmar Mission Church because worship service is conducted in Burmese and the program sheet is in Burmese despite how most of the second-generation persons can no longer read and write Burmese. Therefore, there is a misunderstanding between youth and parents because of the cultural gap. Some of the youth respond to their circumstances in a negative way by voicing the following to the first generation: "we are

educated in this land, we can do what we want, and we are more educated than you.”

Some of the youth also just follow what the first generation said to them to avoid misunderstanding. Each generation feels pain and sorrow for each other because they exist located within the boundaries of two cultures. This clash of cultures separated them in the church fellowship as well as from respected family. So, I am putting them together by presenting my Doctor of Ministry project on “Biblical Youth Care and Counseling to Cross Culture Among the American Myanmar Community.” I will teach youth the value of native culture and help them to overcome their bondage from the native culture. To solve the problem, I will interview them to learn of their struggles caused by the clash of cultures. Then, if I could offer to be a bridge between the first and second generation, healing in my community will result.

The reason for writing this chapter is to present the connection between my spiritual autobiography and contextual analysis with the expectation of bringing out my Doctor of Ministry project. Therefore, this chapter has three objectives. The first objective is to discuss my ministry interest and skills related to the needs of the context. The second objective is to show how the relationship between my ministry interests and skills and the needs of my context can form the basis for my Doctor of Ministry Project. The final objective is to offer a statement of the general nature and context of my project through the development of themes, hypothesis, and general plan of implementation for the Doctor of Ministry project.

Contextual Analysis

This project's context of interest is American Myanmar Mission Church (AMMC) established on July 10, 2011, and now is located at 5401 Trentman Street in Fort Worth, Texas. Rev. Samuel Lung founded the church with a few members. AMMC is necessary for members of the Myanmar Refugee Community who settle in Fort Worth, Texas. The church's members are mostly tribal people from different parts of Myanmar (Burma). In this church, there are 293 church members and sixty-four households in the present record. The church has three ministers, and the church conducts its worship services in Burmese.

This church needs several things due to issues in this context. Firstly, the problem of AMMC is the leadership and management of the church as evidenced by the fact that three church groups separated from AMMC to form three churches. These churches include Falam Christian Fellowship, Dai Christian Church, and Lisu (Iusu) Christian Church. This occurred not because of biblical doctrine but mostly because of different backgrounds among the church members. The pastor and leaders are incapable of handling tribal crises that exist in the church. The pastor fails to prepare in advance to face such a problem although he knew the church members are from different tribes within Myanmar. Therefore, he lost many church members because tribalism is very strong among church members.

Still, I observed another leadership problem that exists in the church in that one of the elders is against the pastor's family and their role in the AMMC. The elder said, "AMMC is a family church, rule by family authority." The pastor's wife told me that the elder greatly criticized them regarding their activities at the church. So, I considered the

reason for the elder being against the pastor's family. I believe that perhaps a weakness exists in the pastor's family since they are human beings. I also observed that the elder is not a spiritual person at all. He is very active in social activities and some of the believers support him. He is very strong in raising his own clan, but he had no desire to separate from the church. Therefore, the church needs God's insight to bring them together in the church.

Language barriers between first-generation and second-generation in the worship service exist because AMMC's members belong to different tribes from different places in Myanmar. They have their own mother tongues and still speak these tongues within their respective families. Since the church conducts worship service in Burmese, some of the believers fail to understand properly. Many children fail to understand the Burmese language because they fail to speak Burmese within their families since they grow up in an English-speaking country. So, when they come to the church listening to the Burmese language it is very boring for them. Therefore, having just a Burmese worship service is insufficient and the pastor must offer an English worship service in the church according to the congregation's need so that children may learn the living word of God clearly in every worship service in the church. If the church could have a youth pastor who could speak both Burmese and English, the church will feed most of the second generation with God's word. My concern is making a bright future for the church.

Another problem is that members fail to bring the tithe into the church. The church running out of tithes and offerings for each member is an important issue that arises. Some persons failed to pay their tithe in the church and instead send the money to their native country. This is not merely a problem but a serious issue because the tithe

belongs to God and persons must bring to the temple. Some family failed to bring their tithes to the house of God because they support their own churches in their native country of Myanmar. Some give their tithes to a minister to please the minister. Therefore, biblical teaching of tithing is needed in AMMC.

When I look at my context, my concern goes to cultural boundaries or barriers that they face in their daily life. The clash of cultures, Myanmar culture and US culture, even affected the church. Some members wish to have worship service in the native order of Myanmar and other groups wish to have worship service in the order of western culture. Therefore, the church leader must be aware of this cross-cultural issue that may bring misunderstanding among church members. So, they must deal with the cultural problems in the church because the first generation loves native culture, and the second generations are in the middle.

The church members need a social worker as well because the pastor is very busy with social work for his members. The church members struggle with their mailboxes, letters, and official appointments due to a lack of English and general knowledge. American Myanmar Mission Church offering a social worker for church members could ease the pastor's burden so that perhaps the pastor would have more time to spend with the living Word of God and feed his members well. However, the problem is that the church must pay the social worker, and this is one of the issues faced by American Myanmar refugees all over the United States.

Many people without U.S. citizenship fail their interviews too. Visiting their native country without U.S. citizenship is difficult. So, we should not neglect those who bear the sorrow of citizenship. Still, many Myanmar refugees failed to receive U.S.

citizenship because all the privileges belong to those who receive citizenship. Therefore, the church must also handle this issue properly and help the people to get citizenship as much as possible because there is insecurity and pain in their hearts that others could not see. So, it is necessary to give pastoral care and counseling to the church members who bear it.

Regarding the need for pastoral care and counseling in the family, all the families go through cultural barriers. There are many barriers between parents and children across cultures since parents brought Myanmar culture and children live in Western culture. All families lack parenting because children live in a different culture that their parents cannot understand because it differs greatly from parenting in their native country and most of the parents lack Western education. Those not born in the U.S. but raised in America face a big problem with family and schools, which culture binds. Parents speak in their native culture in their daily lives and children respond with Western culture and concepts. Therefore, the clash of cultures wound and divided the families even though they are not recognized. Sometimes parents hurt their children and children hurt their parents as the result of misunderstanding between them. Family peace concerns me because it is God's gift as one cannot choose one's family.

One day, I had the opportunity to walk with two teenagers in the evening. They led me to the football grounds because I am a new person to them. Mary started to share about her family and stated "My father used to drink alcohol in my family. I pray for him, but my prayer is not yet answered. Sometimes, I want to share God's word with my dad but I afraid that he may shout at me. I don't believe that my dad is born again. So, pray for my family!" This is the voice of a teenager who needed care and counseling to heal

her. I want parents to know that they hurt their own children through their own sinful actions in the family because children worry about their parents' futures as well.

Another girl asked me a question and shared her struggle. She stated "Sir, how do you overcome your teenage life? Since I have desire and feeling. I love one boy, but I never tell him, I am afraid to lose him. Tell me how you do in your youthful life." Here, she struggles to follow Christ with her youthful desire. This is another step where God allows me to see the need for pastoral care and counseling for the youth. She is the first person who asked me about a love affair in the U.S. as well as who really trusts God. I hope there are not many teenagers or youth wasting their time on love affairs and give up their precious lives to worldly things. Moreover, I saw that some teenagers and youth started using drugs, alcohol, sex, and cigarettes in their own school. Therefore, many parents worry about their sons' and daughters' futures because they fail to know what they do in their schools with their own friends.

I hope my context will show the need of all Myanmar refugees in the United States because I know that I have responsibilities to serve God for the people in my native country and American Myanmar people here. This is the reason God brought me to United Theological Seminary to study again, though I do not deserve to receive this much grace since I was born in just a very small village Ralum. I know that where I was born does not matter, I must tell God's grace to the world.

Ministry Journey

This section presents my skills and interests to the ministry that I mentioned in the educational and professional development portion of my spiritual autobiography. I wish

to begin with God's spoken words to Jeremiah: "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born, I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations" (Jer. 1:5, NIV). According to my mom's memory, I was sick and almost died when I was just three months old. My parents were separated from each other on that day as well. I got in an accident when I was seven years old, and I can still recall the moment. God did not allow me to die at that time because God knew me very well even in my mother's womb, and God set me apart and appointed me as one of God's ministers to serve my people and the nations (future).

I realized God's calling to serve God when there was a youth camp in my village in 2005. A pastor's preaching was powerful and transforming. As a result, while sitting around firewood in my house, God opened my mother's tongue who said, "We need like him in our church, who can preach very well and use by God." I responded that "I will be preaching like him, one day." Then she replied "You are very weak in speaking, you are nothing. You are so small." Hearing her words broke my heart because God used her to break down my heart and my own vision. My mother's negative words made me kneel with a broken heart before God on that very night. God instilled passion and desire in my life to be God's servant on that very night. This is my Damascus Road where I received the seed during a youth camp in my village. To my mother, it was impossible but "what is impossible with men is possible with God" (Lk. 18: 27 RSV).



The above picture is of me and my wife in 2017 on Carmel Prayer Mountain. This prayer mountain, two miles from the town, is one of my key places where I usually wrestle with God. I fasted more than twenty times in my life on this mountain. This is the first place where I surrendered my whole life to serve God with my friend Joseph in 2007. I started preaching the love of God with him after fasting three days and nights. We visited more than twenty-one churches within three months because our hearts filled with the word of God burning inside us. I realize that my skills and interest were on preaching after three months of doing evangelism. This is my first ministry journey among my denomination at Jesus Christ's Church in Myanmar. I learned preaching and teaching in practical ways during that time before going to Bible Seminary. I saw the power of the Spirit of God through that brief ministry. No ministers are in my family, and no one told me to preach or do ministry except Christ who lives in me (Gal. 2:20). Also, I could learn the importance of fasting and prayer in ministry to win lost souls at the feet of Christ Jesus. No one could stop me from preaching the love of Christ in my life.

However, a big life challenge for me came after a short time in ministry. When I went back home, I sat with my parents. I had three opportunities from which to choose for my life including apply for a government job, go to Malaysia for money, or go to

Bible College. This was one of my life's most difficult decisions. My father said, "If you are willing to do ministry, go to Bible School, or if you want to go to Malaysia you can go." I answered and said to my parents "Whatever may happen in my life, I will serve the Lord. I will study God's Word." So, I kneeled before them, and they laid their hands upon my head and prayed for me with tears. Still, I can recall the moment when God helped me to commit my whole life to following Christ in front of my parents. I thought I sang a song that said "I have decided to follow Jesus...no turning back, no turning back" with tears. Therefore, I never blamed my parents when I face troubles or problems in my life's ministry journey because I chose to follow Christ for the rest of my life. Even now, I have no regrets from deciding to follow Christ at that time.

Money was one of the challenges in my life to going to Bible School because my parents could not support me. I thank God for giving me strong faith at that time. God provided all I needed to study God's living Word. If I looked at only the situation at the time I would be here under Pastoral Care and Counseling at United. United English Bible Training School, located in Aizawl, Mizoram State of India, was my first Bible school in my life. American missionaries ran the course for three months. This time opened my eyes to the fact that I needed English for further study. Therefore, I failed to join next semester, but I went to a place further away—Bangalore (India).

I experienced language problems and culture when I arrived at Kor-In Theological Seminary in 2009. I struggled a lot with English in my first year because Myanmar's education was very poor. However, prayer is my strength and key to opening all the wisdom of God throughout my studies in India. God gave me the opportunity to learn God's living word for seven years in India, even though there are many difficulties

in a foreign land as an international student all which I could not write. God gave me that opportunity to become one of God's servants in the world. I learned not only the word of God but also English and different cultures and met many friends from different parts of India. Moreover, God provided all my needs during my theological journey in India.

My first teaching ministry was to the children. More than twenty children came to the church and requested us to teach the word of God during the day. God used children to make me a teacher and speaker before I went to Bible School. Therefore, whenever I go back to my country during my study in India, I usually have children's camps and youth camp that we called crusades. These lasted one or two weeks and we taught in the daytime and had worship service in the evening. Since starting to do children's camp and youth camp from 2008 until 2019, I did more than thirty crusades in my denomination Jesus Christ's Church, and other denominations used to invite me. Therefore, God gave me skills to teach the children and youth, and to preach God's living word. My inner desire is to win the lost soul at the feet of Jesus wherever I go and make that soul a disciple of Jesus.

One day, I received a revelation to become an international speaker to preach the word of God to all nations while I was in India. So, I bought a globe and started to pray for the vision. I forgot the revelation or vision that God gave me but when praying in Indiana before going to United Theological Seminary, I could see that the revelation is fulfilled in my life because God led me from a small village to the United States. Even though I fail to remember the revelation of God that I received in India, God is faithful to fulfill His plan and purpose in my life. Glory to be the Lord Almighty!

I desired not to be a Bible teacher before because my interest is to become a great evangelist or revival speaker. However, God has another purpose in my life and God led me to Myanmar Reformed Theological Seminary (MRTS) in 2016 where I served as teaching staff and chaplain from 2016 to before 2020. I used to take at least four subjects in one semester in MRTS. God is gracious wherever God leads me because I could see my skills to teach in the seminary whereas many people fail to receive this privilege. I can say that students like my teaching and class during these four years. I learned more and more about God's word by teaching the students. So now, I wish to sing "all the way my Savior led me."

Being a chaplain of the Myanmar Reformed Theological Seminary, I used to conduct Friday night prayer every week. So, God helps me to know the skills and anointing that I have by leading prayer every Friday night. Many students transformed their lives and became stronger in their spiritual journey walking with God. When other faculty led prayer, students used to tell me, "Sir, why don't you lead us tonight?" Therefore, I know that God anointed me to lead prayer where God heals the broken hearts of students. God gives me the skill to lead prayer because the student could pour out the student's worries, sadness, sorrow, and burden of assignment at the feet of Jesus. So, it is necessary to have prayer night in seminary because seminaries must train students academically and spiritually. Now I miss my students and Friday night prayer.

Students used to come into my room and share the struggle and their feelings. Some students come with their broken hearts and ask for prayer. Some come with their family problems from back home. Some come with broken relationships. Therefore, I realized that teaching and prayer are not enough in the seminary because students seek

care and counseling. Students seek faculty with whom they can share their difficulties. So, I used to give extra time to the students, sitting, and listening to their inner voices though it was not what I wanted to do before. However, God gives me an opportunity to see the skill that I have in me about which I was ignorant while in seminary. This is the reason I joined Pastoral Care and Counseling at United Theological Seminary.

My passion is to become a revival speaker or powerful preacher. I possess no plan or vision to write a book before I go to Bible College. God put me in Myanmar Reformed Theological Seminary so I could spend more time reading books. Again, God gives me a desire and passion to write a book on “New Testament Survey in Burmese” because many students are not able to understand English books. Therefore, I publish my first book ever in August 2019. God is the one who knows the skills in our lives and gives us the interest to accomplish. I received good feedback about my book, and some tell me to write an Old Testament survey too because there are only translation books and very few academic books written by the native author in Myanmar. So, I have another opportunity to serve God by using my writing skills to help my own people. So, I am writing my second book on the Pentateuch in Burmese for the sake of my people. Although my English is poor, I have confidence in my first language to write a book.

Develop the Synergy

This synergy discusses how my contextual analysis and personal ministerial development converge in the project that I propose. As I do my contextual analysis on American Myanmar Mission Church, which is in Fort Worth, Texas, I could discover that American Myanmar Mission Church and family bear the problems of being cross-

cultural. When I look at the church, there are conflicts between first-generation persons and second-generation persons because a cultural gap exists between them. Especially many youths are stuck their lives by cross-cultural issues because they have their family's culture (Myanmar culture) and society's culture (Western culture). Misunderstandings between parents and children exist due to their cross-cultural reality. Therefore, I intend to explore through my Doctor of Ministry project the topic of "Biblical Youth Care and Counseling to Cross Culture Among the American Myanmar Community."

One of the main issues that arises in my context is a cross-cultural misunderstanding because first-generation persons brought the culture of Myanmar, but second-generation youth grow up in this country. Barriers exist such as communication language differences, body language, feelings, emotions, form of address, ethnocentrism, and family food. Most especially, the language barrier affects the American Myanmar Mission Church because worship service is conducted in Burmese. The program sheet is in Burmese despite how most of the second-generation persons can no longer read and write Burmese. Therefore, there is a misunderstanding between youth and parents because of the cultural gap. Some of the youth respond to their circumstances in a negative way by voicing the following to the first generation "We are educated in this land, we can do what we want, and we are more educated than you." Some of the youth also just follow what the first generation said to them to avoid misunderstanding. Each generation feels pain and sorrow for each other because they are located within the boundaries of two cultures. This clash of cultures separated them in the church fellowship as well as from respected family. So, putting them together by presenting my Doctor of Ministry project on "Biblical Youth Care and Counseling to Cross Culture Among the

American Myanmar Community” will teach youth the value of native culture and help them to overcome their bondage from the native culture. To solve the problem, I will interview them to learn of their struggles caused by the clash of cultures. Then, if I could provide a bridge between the first and second generation, healing in my community will be an anticipated outcome. I hope my research will help my community by sharing the life challenge of intercultural knowledge.

My ministerial skills and interests can serve the needs of my context through my Doctor of Ministry project. I was involved in the ministry from 2017 without salary until I joined Myanmar Reformed Theological Seminary as teaching faculty. As previously mentioned, my ministerial skills and interests include preaching, teaching, leading prayer, counseling, and writing. I need to develop my counseling and writing skills as I remain weak in counseling skills. Therefore, I look to develop my counseling skills under the guidance of the focus group Pastoral Care and Counseling at United Theological Seminary.

When I look back at the ministry that I performed by God’s grace from 2007 to 2020, my thirteen years of ministry experience most of the time involved preaching and teaching to youth. So, it is possible to see my passion and calling to youth ministry in the ministry of God’s kingdom. I could see that my preaching and teaching by God’s grace transformed the lives of many youths from worldly to Christian. Even some of them went to Bible College and become ministers in my denomination. I had the opportunity to baptize more than forty people in my ministry. However, I did this not for my pleasure but because no minister was available to baptize in that place during that time. I especially know that God uses me in God’s kingdom to minister to youth. I look forward

to developing my skills and interests by doing my Doctor of Ministry project on “Biblical Youth Care and Counseling to Cross Culture” under United Theological Seminary.

When I discover the needs of my context, it is based on cross-cultural problems in the community with many conflicts existing between the first-generation persons and second-generation persons. As first generations come into the United States with Myanmar culture and live in a different culture, the struggle with cross-cultural issues in daily life. Also, the second generations grow up in mixed culture both within and outside their families. The community of the church also faces the problem of crossing cultures. So, it is necessary to give counseling to youth who are stuck with a mixed culture—socially, mentally, and spiritually.

The language barrier is one of the intercultural or cross-cultural issues in the American Myanmar community. Also, the church faces the problem of language barriers in worship service. Although worship service is conducted in the Burmese language, many children fail to understand properly what the preacher says. Parents work with little English in their own society and are unable to share their feelings with their bosses. A language barrier exists between parents and children. Parents struggle with their children's homework given by teachers and are unable to help them. Therefore, it is necessary to offer biblical counseling to them.

Biblical youth counseling to a cross-cultural community is not only necessary for American Myanmar Mission Church but also for all refugees of the Myanmar community in the United States. Generally, cross-cultural misunderstandings knowingly or unknowingly occur in church fellowships as well as family among Myanmar Refugees. The results of a cross-cultural reality can be both negative and positive. Those who grew

up in a mixed culture have an opportunity to learn two or three languages in their community and they could have two ways of living. So, I plan to visit the American Myanmar community in the United States as much as possible to offer biblical youth care and counseling based on two clashing cultures. Since I was in India for seven years, I too have cross-cultural experiences. Therefore, my ministerial skills and interests will help many youths to escape from cross-cultural oppression. Also, my skills will develop by doing biblical youth counseling to cross-cultural communities. This will be very useful for my future ministry because I have connected with youth from my early ministry till now.

I seek to learn through my Doctor of Ministry project how to bring back many youths before the Lord Jesus. I also seek to learn the skills of biblical care and counseling to youth. I wish to learn how to heal the greatly broken lives, spirits, and hearts of youths at the feet of Jesus our Lord by doing my Doctor of Ministry project. I saw many American Myanmar youths suffering under intercultural issues in the United States.

Conclusion

My ministry interests and skills relate to the needs of my context of American Myanmar Mission Church in Fort Worth, Texas. I chose as my Doctor of Ministry project topic “Biblical Youth Care and Counseling to Cross Culture Among the American Myanmar Community” by relating my context and ministry skills. I chose this topic after seeing the pain and suffering of refugees’ daily lives in my context. The pain of cross-cultural and language barriers affects the church, family, and individuals. They need care and counseling, and I would like to focus my study on youth because they receive

education in this country. They are the fruits of the first generation of Myanmar refugees. However, without biblical youth care and counseling, they will have misunderstandings with the first-generation community. They may look down on their own parents who brought them to the United States after becoming educated people.

Therefore, the problem in my context that I chose to address in my Doctor of Ministry Project is the issue of cross-cultural misunderstanding; it causes conflicts between the first and second generation among the American Myanmar community. My hypothesis is that if the members of the American Myanmar Mission Church are exposed to pastoral care and counseling practices, then they will be equipped to identify what are the cross-cultural problems that they each face. I will teach and train youth by using PowerPoint in the church about cross-cultural reality and its effects so that youth and the young adults can maintain their lives in family and church. If young adults are not given the information of cross-cultural misunderstanding, they will hurt themselves as well as their families because their two cultures in their respected families cause them to separate. Therefore, all the youngsters need care and counseling in their burden of intercultural lives.

Then, regarding measurements, I used qualitative analysis using interviews, storytelling, and observations to prove my hypothesis. I interviewed youth, adults, parents, and church leaders concerning cross-cultural misunderstanding and conflicts. Sometimes, I also use the storytelling method to prove my hypothesis. I also used the observation study method on my special cross-cultural area. I observed youth in family, church, and society from a cross-cultural perspective. My intent is to help and give biblical youth care and counseling to intercultural American Myanmar community. I

believe that my Doctor of Ministry project will be very helpful in my future ministry here and native land of Myanmar.

I used two biblical stories in my Doctor of Ministry project topic “Biblical Youth Care and Counseling to Cross Culture Among the American Myanmar Community.” One is from the Old Testament and involves the story of Mordecai and Queen Esther (chapter two through eight). I would like to acknowledge Mordecai’s care and counseling to Esther, a parentless queen in the Persian Empire. One sees Mordecai’s caregiving in the life of Esther in the cross-cultural or foreign land. I hope that this biblical caregiving will be relevant to American Myanmar Community too. If the Myanmar community has a caregiver like Esther was to Mordecai, then, second generations might be more successful in their lives. From the New Testament, I used the story of Jesus and the Samaritan woman (Jn. 4:1ff) because Jesus breaks down the barrier of culture and gives healing counseling to the Samaritan woman.

CHAPTER TWO

BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

This biblical foundation is on the text Esther 4:1-17, which a faculty member of the Pastoral Care and Counseling group at United Theological Seminary approved. The selected key verses include verses thirteen and fourteen, which state:

Then Mordecai told them to return answer to Esther, “Think not that in the king’s palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews. For if you keep silence at such a time as this, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another quarter, but you and your father’s house will perish. And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”¹

The reason for choosing this biblical foundation text of Esther 4:1-17 is because of the topic of this Doctor of Ministry project entitled “Biblical Youth Care and Counseling to Cross Culture Among the American Myanmar Community.” The project’s context is American Myanmar Mission Church located in Fort Worth, Texas. One of the common crises among the American Myanmar Community in the United States involve cross-cultural issues by visiting American Myanmar Mission Church. The cross-cultural issue is not merely a problem because culture involves shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterize the daily life of the community of the people, and Burmese (Myanmar) immigrants are relatively recent arrivals to the United States. Most

¹ All biblical citations will be from the Revised Standard Version, unless otherwise noted, Esther 4:13-14.

immigrated after General Ne Win seized power in Myanmar in 1962. Among the Burmese, there are eight major ethnic groups, and the nationals are diverse in culture, education, and religion. They suffered under an oppressive government regime, and most of those who immigrated to the United States came as refugees. In 2008, Myanmar immigrants made up nearly 30% of all refugees who entered the United States.² Therefore, this cross-cultural issue is an urgent and important matter among this community who immigrated to United States recently. This project hypothesizes that “If the members of the American Myanmar Mission Church are exposed to pastoral care and counseling practices, then they will be equipped to identify the cross-cultural problems that they each face.”

The statement “life is a journey or immigration in the world” is true. During life’s journey, there are different cultures according to places, people, and nations that shape daily life. This foundation confidently asserts that this selected passage of Esther 4:1-17 relates to the community of interest who immigrated to different parts of the United States, since this text presents the life of Jews refugees in the land of the Persian Empire. The key person is Mordecai who works to provide Esther with a successful life. Also, Mordecai provides youth care and counseling to Esther in this special text. Of interest is Mordecai’s caregiving to Esther that shows the relationship between the first-generation and second-generation. Also, this ‘togetherness relationship,’ is the key to their secret success in the land as refugees. Mordecai becomes a caregiver for Esther amid different cultures, languages, religions, and politics. Mordecai warns Esther that she could not hide, and her life is in danger after she becomes queen. The second-generation Esther

² Tessa Li Powell, “Burmese Immigrants,” Immigration to the United States, <https://www.immigrationtounitedstates.org/396-burmese-immigrants.html>.

responds positively to Mordecai's care and counseling concerning Haman's Plot.

Mordecai knows that Esther has a royal position to save the life of her Jewish people.

Thus, this biblical example of caregiving will be relevant and applicable to the American Myanmar Community. If the Myanmar Community has caregivers like Esther has in Mordecai, God will intervene and deliver persons from the cross-cultural issues.

Michael J. Gorman writes that "Exegesis is an investigation, conversation, and art."³ He offers seven elements of exegesis and the steps in writing an exegesis paper in his book *Elements of Biblical Exegesis: A Basic Guide for Students and Ministers*. They are survey (preparation for reading, or introduction), contextual analysis (of the text's historical and literary contexts), formal analysis (of the text's form, structure, and movement), detailed analysis, synthesis, reflection, and expansion and refinement of the exegesis.⁴ Therefore, this chapter applies the seven elements of exegesis steps as much as possible. Trisha Wheelock mentions clearly that recent studies interpret the Esther scroll from varied perspectives, including feminist, postcolonial, sociological, structural, reader-response, deconstruction, anthropological.⁵ Firstly, to exegete the selected text Esther 4:1-17, this chapter discusses the background of the book of Esther including its authorship and date, purpose, historical setting, literary context, and Mordecai. Detailed exegesis of Esther 4:1-17 follows. This chapter ends with a summary of the text and describes how the text is foundational to this Doctor of Ministry project.

³ Michael J. Gorman, *Elements of Biblical Exegesis: A Basic Guide for Students and Ministers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011), 4.

⁴ Gorman, *Elements of Biblical Exegesis*, 38.

⁵ Trisha Wheelock, "Esther, Book of, Critical Issues," in *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, ed. John D. Barry (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016), Logos Bible Software.

Background of the Book of Esther

The book of Esther is one of the only two books of the Bible named after a woman. The book of Esther presents an alternative view of life as the Diaspora. In post-exilic prophetic books, hope for the exile centers on a rebuilt temple, a purified priesthood, an anointed Davidic ruler, a renewal of the covenant, and a return to the land of Israel. Thus, Esther and Mordecai are role models for succeeding in the Diaspora.⁶ The book of Esther tells the story of a Jewish woman and her uncle who, by their courage and wit, deliver the Jews from threatened genocide.⁷

Authorship and Date

The book *Oxford Dictionary of Christian Church* mentions that “Nothing is known of the author.”⁸ So, it is possible that the authorship of this book is unknown. According to the internal evidence of the book, the writer perhaps had a thorough knowledge of Persian court life and customs. Obviously, the author wrote this book after the death of Ahasuerus (the Xerxes of the Greeks), which took place in 465. The minute and specific account also given many historical details make it probable that the writer was a contemporary of Mordecai and Esther. Hence, one may conclude that the book was probably written about 444-434, and that the author was one of the Jews of the

⁶ Wheelock, “Esther, Book of, Critical Issues,” Logos Bible Software.

⁷ Irene Nowell, “The Book of Esther,” in *New Collegeville Bible Commentary: Old Testament*, ed. Daniel Durken (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2015), 614.

⁸ Frank Leslie Cross and Elizabeth A. Livingstone, eds., s.v. “Esther, Book of,” in *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2005), 566.

dispersion.⁹ The latest possible date for the book is 94 C.E., which Josephus focused on the LXX version. Then the earliest date for the Greek translation of Esther is either 78 B.C.E or more likely, 114 B.C.E, either of which moves the date of the MT back into the second century B.C.E (167-135 B.C.E.).¹⁰

Purpose of the Book

Another purpose of the book is to provide the historical grounds and cultic significance for the celebration of Purim, a festival that the Torah fails to mention.¹¹ The book primarily concerns itself with telling a story that would provide the “historical” basis for the festival of Purim—both days of it (Est. 9:16-19, 20-22, 26-28, 31).¹²

Historical Setting Book of Esther

The introduction to Ezra-Nehemiah contains a brief history of the Persian Empire. After Cyrus, Cambyses reigned (530-522 B.C), followed by Darius I (522-486).¹³ Also, the son of Darius I was Xerxes, whose mother was Atossa, the daughter of Cyrus.¹⁴ The decree of Cyrus permitted the return of captives from Babylon to Jerusalem in 539, at the

⁹ M. G. Easton, s.v. “The Book of Esther,” *Easton’s Bible Dictionary* (New York, NY: Harper and Brothers, 1893), 238.

¹⁰ Carey A. Moore, “Esther, Book of,” in *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, vol. 2, ed. David N. Freedman (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1992), 641.

¹¹ Mark W. Chavalas, “Esther, Theology of,” in *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1996), 208.

¹² Moore, “Esther, Book of,” 634.

¹³ Mervin Breneman, “Esther,” in *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*, vol. 10, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1993), 278.

¹⁴ Victor H. Matthews, Mark W. Chavalas, and John. H. Walton, “Esther,” in *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2000), 483.

very beginning of the Persian period.¹⁵ According to Esther 1:1, the events of the book take place in the time of Persian King Xerxes (Ahasuerus) between 486-465 B.C. This would place the events between the completion of the temple construction under Zerubbabel (in 516 B.C., during the reign of Darius I) and the arrival of more returnees to Jerusalem under Ezra in 458 B.C.¹⁶ According to Esther, the court of Ahasuerus was situated at Susa or Shushan, the ancient capital of Elam.¹⁴ The city became part of the Persian Empire when Cyrus took Babylon and its provinces. Darius I made Susa an administrative capital and built a palace in the city.¹⁷ The first task of the new king was to complete what his father began in Susa, and two inscriptions testify to his residence being there early during his reign.¹⁸ Susa became the Persian royal city at the time of Esther. The book of Esther portrays Xerxes as a successful ruler who quelled revolts in Babylon and Egypt.¹⁹

The book takes place in the Persian period (539-331 B.C.) after many Israelites returned from exile to the land of Palestine to rebuild the temple and set up the sacrificial system.²⁰ Thus, the story of Esther is located within such a historical setting. The story concerns the fate of a group of Jews who, about fifty or sixty years after being allowed to

¹⁵ Joyce G. Baldwin, *Esther: Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1984), 17.

¹⁶ Breneman, "Esther," 278.

¹⁷ John D. Barry et al., *Faithlife Study Bible* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016), Logos.

¹⁸ Baldwin, *Esther*, 20.

¹⁹ Debra Reid, *Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries*, vol. 13, *Esther* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2008), 24.

²⁰ John A. Martin, "Esther," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, eds. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 698-699.

return to Jerusalem, still find themselves in the eastern Persian Empire.²¹ An amazing sequence of events involving Haman, Esther, and Mordecai displays God's salvation of God's people.²² The life of Esther demonstrates that God can use women in powerful ways to change the course of history.²³

Literary Context

The writer probably knew Persia sufficiently well to give the story thoroughly Persian colorings, but secular history knows nothing of his heroes Mordecai and Esther, nor of any queen of Xerxes named Vashti.²⁴ Many scholars believe that regarding literary genre, Esther is a historical novel or historical romance.²⁵ However, interpreters differ in whether they emphasize the word "historical" or the word "novel."²⁶ In the nineteenth century European community, novels were a growing genre of stories that represented the reality of the age in which they were produced. As a result, Esther was classified as a novella.²⁷ Good stories present problems that require resolution, and Esther does this. The

²¹ Reid, *Esther*, 24.

²² Stephen F. Noll, "Esther," in *Evangelical Commentary on the Bible*, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1995), 326.

²³ Gary V. Smith, "Esther," in *Ezra-Nehemiah and Esther*, vol. 5, *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publisher, 2010), 217.

²⁴ John C. H. How, "Esther," in *A New Commentary on Holy Scripture: Including the Apocrypha*, vol. 1, eds. C. Gore, H. L. Goudge, and A. Guillaume (New York, NY: The Macmillan Company, 1942), 304.

²⁵ D. S. Dockery, ed., *Holman Bible Handbook* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 1992), 300.

²⁶ Roger L. Omanson and Philip A. Noss, *A Handbook on the Book of Esther: The Hebrew and Greek Texts* (New York, NY: United Bible Societies, 1997), 2.

²⁷ Breneman, "Esther," 286.

solution is unexpected, which adds interest to the narrative.²⁸ Therefore, the book gives every indication of being a historical narrative.²⁹ Esther is the only book in the Hebrew Bible that fails to mention God's name. Also absent is any reference to the law, Jewish sacrifice, prayer, or revelation. Esther is the only book of the Old Testament absent from the Dead Sea Scrolls.³⁰ In addition, the New Testament fails to quote from the book of Esther.³¹

The book is hostile only to Haman and his supporters, and not to the king, his court, or the general population.³² Persons read Esther during the festival of Purim in celebration of the deliverance of the Jews from oppression and death at the hand of their enemies (Est. 3:7; 9:24-26).³³ However, there is some doubt about the historicity of the book of Esther because there no sufficient confirmation from any extra-biblical Persian document exists. The Book of Esther for centuries was a source of encouragement to persecuted Jews around the world. Adolf Hitler banned it and forbade the observance of Purim. He also declared it a capital offense, without the possibility of trial, for Christians or Jews to possess a copy of the Book of Esther.³⁴

²⁸ Breneman, "Esther," 288.

²⁹ C. R. Anderson, *Esther, CSB Study Bible*, eds. E. A. Blum and T. Wax (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), 746.

³⁰ Dockery, *Holman Bible Handbook*, 301.

³¹ Martin, "Esther," 698–699.

³² Baldwin, *Esther*, 36.

³³ Omanson and Noss, *A Handbook on the Book of Esther*, 5.

³⁴ Richard R. Losch, "Mordecai," in *All the People in the Bible: An A-Z Guide to the Saints, Scoundrels, and Other Characters in Scripture* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2008), 111.

Mordecai

Mordecai is a central character of the book of Esther, second in importance only to Esther.³⁵ The text first introduces Mordecai as a Jew living in the acropolis of Susa, the Persian capital (Est. 2:5). He belongs to a Benjaminite family that was exiled from Judea along with King Jehoiachin in 597 B.C.E.³⁶ Most of the Jews in Babylon are assigned Akkadian names that they are required to use.³⁷ The name Mordecai is almost certainly derived from Marduk- the name of the chief god of Babylon.³⁸ Mordecai is the son of Jair whose father was Shimei and whose grandfather was Kish. The Book of Esther describes Mordecai as the nephew of Esther's father. Since Esther's parents are deceased, he raises her as he would his own daughter (Est. 2:7).³⁹

After Esther is taken into the harem, Mordecai passes on to her his knowledge of the plot against the king's life, which he discovers (Est. 2:22). In chapter three, Mordecai makes his most important contribution to the progress of the story when he jeopardizes the security of the Jewish people by refusing to do obeisance to the newly elevated Haman. This inadequately justified stubbornness proves to be the root cause of Haman's plot to destroy all the Jews of the Persian Empire. In chapter four, Mordecai redeems

³⁵ David J. A. Clines, "Mordecai," in *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, vol. 4, ed. David N. Freedman (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1992), 902.

³⁶ Clines, "Mordecai," 902.

³⁷ Losch, "Mordecai," 298.

³⁸ Clines, "Mordecai," 902.

³⁹ Kelly Whitcomb, "Mordecai," in *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, ed. John D. Barry (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016), Logos Software.

himself somewhat by making a positive intervention on behalf of the Jews and insisting that Esther enter the king's presence uninvited to beg for the life of her people.⁴⁰

Exegesis on the Selected Text Esther 4:1-17

Chapter four resumes where chapter three ends as the king and Haman happily drink while Susa is bewildered, and the focus initially narrows to one man-Mordecai.⁴¹ In this chapter, Mordecai learns that Haman issues a royal decree in the king's name, stating that on a certain day the Jews are to be destroyed. So, Mordecai asks Queen Esther to plead for the Jews before the king.⁴² Mordecai urges Esther to reveal her identity as a Jew and plead for the lives of her people.⁴³ This chapter begins with a dialogue between Mordecai and Esther through the intermediaries of her servants, especially the eunuch Hathach.

Mordecai's Awareness (Est. 4:1-3)

Esther 4:1-3 states that:

When Mordecai learned all that had been done, Mordecai rent his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, wailing with a loud and bitter cry; he went up to the entrance of the king's gate, for no one might enter the king's gate clothed with sackcloth. And in every province, wherever the king's command and his decree came, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting and weeping and lamenting, and most of them lay in sackcloth and ashes.

⁴⁰ Clines, "Mordecai," 902-903.

⁴¹ Reid, *Esther*, 98.

⁴² Omanson and Noss, *A Handbook on the Book of Esther*, 114-115.

⁴³ Bill T. Arnold and Brayan E. Beyer, *Encountering the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing, 2015), 340.

This verse refers to chapter three, which discusses Haman's plot to destroy all the Jews of the Persian Empire. The verb 'learned' shows that Mordecai studies the situation very well. Mordecai tearing his clothes and putting on sackcloth reflects how persons during their time expressed bitterness. Regarding verse two, the verb 'went up' reveals Mordecai's action in response to the problem. And "the entrance of the king's gate" helps readers to know the place where Mordecai approaches. Mordecai knows the right place to face the problem. When the passage states "And in every province," it refers to Esther 1:1, which states "from India to Ethiopia over one hundred and twenty-seven provinces" (Est. 1:1). The "King's command and his decree," is to destroy, to slay, and to annihilate all Jews-young and old, women and children-in one day. The decree is to all the peoples to be ready for that day (Est. 3:13-14).

Critical Explanation of the Text

Studying Esther 4:1-3 reveals how Mordecai immediately responds to the present crisis, both mentally and emotionally. When Mordecai hears about the edict, he responds in a way that again betrays his heritage.⁴⁴ Mordecai opens the conversation with Esther by not only exhibiting the traditional signs of mourning (torn garments, wearing of sackcloth and ashes), but by doing this at the very threshold of the royal gate.⁴⁵ Other Jews also mourn, but Mordecai's behavior gets the attention of Queen Esther.⁴⁶ Tearing

⁴⁴ Judy Fentress-Williams, "Esther," in *Fortress Commentary on the Bible: The Old Testament and Apocrypha*, eds. Gale A. Yee, Hugh R. Page, and Matthew J. M. Coomber (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2014), 491.

⁴⁵ Nowell, "The Book of Esther," 614.

⁴⁶ Fentress-Williams, "Esther," 491.

of clothing was a customary way of expressing great emotion such as anger, grief, and humiliation.⁴⁷ Also, sackcloth and ashes were symbols of mourning and grief in the Old Testament (Jn. 3:6), and these were known practices of Mesopotamia and Canaan. Persian mourning as recorded by Herodotus included tearing clothes, weeping, and wailing.⁴⁸ Sackcloth, fasting, dirt or dust, rending of clothes, and ashes vividly demonstrated the person's emotions.⁴⁹ The custom of sackcloth and ashes included prayers of confession and worship (1Kgs. 21:27-29; Neh. 9:1-3; Dn. 9:3).⁵⁰ Mordecai fails to enter the palace gate because wearing sackcloth within the palace was prohibited, as it symbolized mourning and death.

Esther and Mordecai's Plot to Save the Jews

Esther's concern for Mordecai (Est. 4:4) states that "When Esther's maids and her eunuchs came and told her, the queen was deeply distressed; she sent garments to clothe Mordecai, so that he might take off his sackcloth, but he would not accept them" (Est. 4:4). Who are Esther's maids and her eunuchs? According to Esther 1:10 and Esther 2:9, there are seven including Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, Abagtha, Zethar, and Carcas. Regarding her eunuchs, the king gave Esther some of his eunuchs to serve her after marriage (Est. 4:5). According to verse four, "the queen was deeply distressed," because of Mordecai's actions. Also, this is the first step of Esther emotionally

⁴⁷ Omanson and Noss, *A Handbook on the Book of Esther*, 116.

⁴⁸ Matthews, Chavalas, and Walton, "Esther," 208.

⁴⁹ James M. Freeman and Harold J. Chadwick, *Manners and Customs of the Bible* (North Brunswick, NJ: Bridge-Logos Publishers, 1998), 296.

⁵⁰ Kenneth A. Mathews, "Esther," *Holman Concise Bible Commentary*, ed. D. S. Dockery (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1998), 195.

responding to Mordecai. The sentence that states “she sent garments to clothe Mordecai,” reveals that Esther’s action is very simple, and she fails to see Mordecai’s real message and respond to him.

Critical Explanation of the Text

Esther’s maidens and eunuchs live outside the palace and probably see Mordecai as they come to work. They know the relationship between Mordecai and Esther.⁵¹ Mordecai could not communicate with Esther directly because of her unique royal position. Hearing the news about Mordecai’s action deeply troubles Esther emotionally. She keeps in touch with Mordecai and continues to be concerned about his welfare. Esther’s great distress indicates genuine love and concern for Mordecai. “She sent clothes” so he could enter the palace, and being seen with Mordecai in his present situation would imply that she is Jewish.⁵² This description of Esther’s response to Mordecai’s mourning suggests that by sending Mordecai a new set of clothes Esther fails to want a quick fix to Mordecai’s unseemly behavior, but instead she wishes Mordecai to dress in a way that would again qualify him for entry into the king’s gate.⁵³ Her objective in doing so was either to qualify him for resuming his former office or else perhaps fitting him to come near enough the palace to inform her of the cause of such sudden and extreme distress.⁵⁴ At first, Esther learns only of Mordecai’s outward humiliation and

⁵¹ Smith, “Esther,” 254.

⁵² Breneman, “Esther,” 335.

⁵³ Reid, *Esther*, 100.

⁵⁴ Robert Jamieson, “The Book of Esther,” in *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1997), 640.

sends relief in the form of new garments.⁵⁵ She fails to seem aware of the edict about the execution of the Jews.⁵⁶

Mordecai informs the queen (Est. 4:5-8), the writer states that:

Then Esther called for Hathach, one of the king's eunuchs, who had been appointed to attend her, and ordered him to go to Mordecai to learn what this was and why it was. Hathach went out to Mordecai in the open square of the city in front of the king's gate, and Mordecai told him all that had happened to him, and the exact sum of money that Haman had promised to pay into the king's treasuries for the destruction of the Jews. Mordecai also gave him a copy of the written decree issued in Susa for their destruction, that he might show it to Esther and explain it to her and charge her to go to the king to make supplication to him and entreat him for her people (Est. 4:5-8).

Esther orders Hathach "to go to Mordecai to learn what this was and why it was," and this indicates that Esther is ignorant of what Mordecai learns regarding all that happens in the Persian Empire.

Critical Explanation of the Text

Esther first sends clothes, but Mordecai refuses (Est. 4:4). Then she sends Hathach to discover the reason for his risky actions. Hathach returns with detailed information: a copy of the decree and a report of the exact amount Haman promises to pay Ahasuerus.⁵⁷

Esther considers her options (Est. 4:9-11), which reads:

And Hathach went and told Esther what Mordecai had said. Then Esther spoke to Hathach and gave him a message for Mordecai, saying, "All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that if any man or woman goes to the king inside the inner court without being called, there is but one law; all alike are to be put to death, except the one to whom the king holds out the golden scepter that he

⁵⁵ Noll, "Esther," 330.

⁵⁶ Martin, "Esther," 707.

⁵⁷ Nowell, "The Book of Esther," 621.

may live. And I have not been called to come into the king these thirty days” (Est. 4:9-11).

Esther responds to Mordecai that if she approaches the king without his invitation, she will be put to death. Mordecai’s exchange with Esther asserts the reality or worldview of the Jewish community over that of the Persian Empire. In this clash of culture, there is only one right answer, and that is to speak out on behalf of her people.⁵⁸

Mordecai insists (Est. 4:12-14) and records these words:

And they told Mordecai what Esther had said. Then Mordecai told them to return answer to Esther, “Think not that in the king’s palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews. For if you keep silence at such a time as this, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another quarter, but you and your father’s house will perish. And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?” (Est. 4:12-14).

“Think not that in the king’s palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews” (RSV). When I look at the Greek text there are different insight: “καὶ εἰπὼν αὐτῇ Εσθηρ μὴ εἴπῃς σεαυτῇ ὅτι σωθήσῃ μόνη ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ παρὰ πάντας τοὺς Ἰουδαίου⁵⁹

“The Greek word “εἰπὼν” is 2nd Person/ Singular/ Aorist Imperative Active Verb from λέγω ... The meaning is “say, speak, tell; call, name, maintain, assert, declare; mean, intend; think (to oneself); command, order; answer, ask.”⁶⁰ The imperative verb strengthens the message of Mordecai. Therefore, it was not a merely word but command or order to Esther. However, the English Bible might not give this sense of imperative voice.

Also, the Greek word εἴπῃς comes from second Person/ singular/ Aorist Subjunctive Active verb of λέγω. In this particular context, the meaning of the

⁵⁸ Fentress-Williams, “Esther,” 491.

⁵⁹ *Septuaginta: With Morphology* (Stuttgart, Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1979), Es. 4:13, electronic ed.

⁶⁰ BibleWorks, *UBS Greek- English Dictionary*, electronic ed.

word “lego” should be chosen “think one self.” Therefore, the RSV Bible translators choose the word “think” for this particular verse. Mordecai as a mentor could capture the mind of Esther not to think only for herself. The word σωθήσῃ comes from second Person/ singular/ Future Indicative Passive of verb σώζω. The meaning is “save, to save from death, to keep alive, to preserve, to save oneself, to escape; to be saved, to attain salvation.”⁶¹

In this verse, RVS and NIV Bible translators used the word “escape,” than other words. Mordecai challenges that Esther would not be save from death if she rejects to take action for her people.

In this text, the word “βασιλεία” is Dative case/ Feminine Noun/ singular from βασιλεία means “kingdom, dominion, rule, reign; position of queen Est 1,13.”⁶² RSV Bible used the word king’s palace and NIV used ‘king’s house. The word “king’s place’ reveals the position and responsibility of Esther. My translation reads; Then Mordecai commanded to Esther, “Do not think to yourself you will be saved alone in the kingdom (king’s palace) than all other Jews.”

Critical Explanation of the Text

Mordecai warns Esther that she could not hide. She faces danger if she approaches the king uninvited, but she also is in danger if she does nothing.⁶³ Although Esther is the king’s wife, she will not escape from the hand of Haman when he knows Esther is a Jewess, especially as she a relative of the hated Mordecai. Therefore, Mordecai gives clear insight that Esther will not be saved from the destruction dictated by

⁶¹ Johan Lust, Erik Eynikel, and Katrin Hauspie, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint*, rev. ed. (Stuttgart, Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2003), σώζω.

⁶² Lust, Eynikel, and Hauspie, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint*, βασιλεία

⁶³ Breneman, “Esther,” 336.

the edict. As Mordecai is a caregiver to Esther he acts as her protective guardian. Also, he reminds her of her identity as a Jewess, which he tells her not to reveal when she steps into the king's palace. Therefore, Roger L. Omanson and Philip A. Noss write in their book *A Handbook on the Book of Esther*, The Greek text literally states that “that you alone will be saved in the kingdom among all the Jews.”⁶⁴

Mordecai simply plants the idea in Esther's mind that she would die if she failed to act.⁶⁵ Mordecai mentions the phrase “all other Jews,” which refers to Haman's decree calling for the death of all Jews (Est. 4:13). Therefore, Mordecai counsels Esther saying, “Do not think to yourself you will be saved alone in the kingdom (king's palace) than any all other Jews” (Est. 4:13). The statement perhaps fails to please Esther's ear, but this is the right message for her life. It helps Esther to see herself and her position. Esther might think that she will be saved in the Persian Empire because she is a queen of the Persian King. This is the way Mordecai counsels Esther, which helps her to make the right decision and action.

Mordecai continues in verse fourteen “ὥς ὅτι ἐὰν παρακούσης ἐν τούτῳ τῷ καιρῷ ἄλλοθεν βοήθεια καὶ σκέπη ἔσται τοῖς Ιουδαίοις σὺ δὲ καὶ ὁ οἶκος τοῦ πατρὸς σου ἀπολείσθῃ καὶ τίς οἶδεν εἰ εἰς τὸν καιρὸν τοῦτον ἐβασίλευσας”⁶⁶

The Greek word παρακούσης comes from second person/ Singular/ Aorist Subjective Active of “παρακούω” The meaning is “refuse to listen; pay no attention to or overhear, as being unwilling to hear disregard, and ignore something.”⁶⁷ Most of the

⁶⁴ Omanson and Noss, *A Handbook on the Book of Esther*, 130.

⁶⁵ Martin, “Esther,” 707.

⁶⁶ *Septuaginta: With Morphology*, Es. 4:14, electronic ed.

⁶⁷ BibleWorks, “parakou,w,” *UBS Greek- English Dictionary*, electronic ed.

English Bible Versions use the word “silent.” Therefore, the word “silent” must be understood as “refuse to listen; pay no attention, unwilling to hear or ignore” in the particular text between Mordecai and Esther.

My own translation reads: For if you pay no attention in this an appointed time as such, help and protection will come for Jews from another place, but you and your father’s house will be destroyed. And who knows you have not become like a queen for such an appointed time as this. In verse fourteen, Mordecai mentions the time by saying “For if you keep silence at such a time as this” (Est. 4:14), or “For if you pay no attention in this an appointed time as such.” Here, Mordecai helps Esther to see the importance of time to respond to the situation. Esther could keep silent, which means pay no attention or refuse to listen to Mordecai’s counseling, and even she could ignore his request to save the people of Jews. Mordecai might say to Esther this is God’s appointed time for you to act. This is the proper time to stand for the people. This is the right time to use her position as queen. Also, it is an opportunity to serve God. Mordecai teaches Esther the value and importance of time because time is irreplaceable.

Since Ecclesiastes 3:1 teaches very clearly that “for everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven” (Eccl. 3:1). Mordecai warns Esther; if she pays no attention to the proper time, she will not receive a second opportunity. Therefore, Paul L. Redditt writes that “Mordecai’s urging Esther to become involved on behalf of her people (4:13-14) shows that holding positions of power carries with it the responsibility to use that power appropriately.”⁶⁸

⁶⁸ Paul L. Redditt, “Esther,” in *Theological Interpretation of the Old Testament*, ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 118.

Mordecai states that “Relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another quarter” (Est. 4:4). The words “help and protection” in this context are preferable to “relief and deliverance.” However, the intention of the words is very similar because Haman wants to kill the Jews wherever they live in the Persian Empire. Mordecai could learn the need of Jews, which includes help, support, and protection, shelter from Haman’s plan. Here is the lesson: as a counselor Mordecai sees the need of the people and the person to approach. The phrase “from another place (quarter)” is Mordecai referring to God. Judy Fentress-Williams states that “Mordecai’s response makes no direct reference to God, but hints at the divine when he says that if she does not help, “help will rise for the Jews from another quarter.”

In addition, Mervin Breneman interprets this phrase as “Mordecai’s statement reveals a deep conviction of God’s providence, a belief that God rules in the world, even in the details of the nations and in the lives of individuals.”⁶⁹ Robert Jamieson also writes that “Mordecai confidently believed God would interpose, and, if not through her, by some other deliverer, save His people.”⁷⁰ However, the meaning of the words from another quarter is much debated. Literally, it means “from another place.” The most common interpretation is that this is an indirect reference to God. Some interpreters consider “another quarter” to refer to an unnamed individual.⁷¹ However, clearly the message refers to God.

⁶⁹ Breneman, “Esther,” 337.

⁷⁰ Jamieson, “The Book of Esther,” 305.

⁷¹ Omanson and Noss, *A Handbook on the Book of Esther*, 131.

Mordecai fails to stop telling Esther that help and protection will come from another place, but he continues to remind Esther saying, “you and your father’s house will be destroyed” (Est. 4:14). Mordecai reveals his own conviction that God will not permit the extinction of God’s people. If Esther fails, God will have another way of saving the Jews, but Esther and her immediate family will lose.⁷² Mordecai reminds Esther that if she fails to attempt to avert this terrible calamity she would surely die, even though she is a member of the royal household.⁷³ Mordecai warns Esther that she and her father’s house will be killed if she pays no attention in this time while God will save the Jews in other ways.

Finally, Mordecai informs Esther: “And who knows you have not become like a queen for such an appointed time as this” (Est. 4:14). This simple statement points out Esther’s position as queen of the Persian Empire. What is clear is that Mordecai’s counseling is inspirational and effective for Esther. Mordecai’s penetrating statement finally convinces Esther to risk her life for her fellow Jews, which is the theme of the book: “who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?” (4:14).⁷⁴ Mordecai is confident that God would act on their behalf. He hopes that God would work through Esther because of her unique position in the kingdom.⁷⁵ Mordecai tries to encourage Esther by reminding her that becoming queen was God’s plan so that she could have a position and influence to save her people. Esther’s presence in the Persian king’s palace is to help and protect the Jews in this moment of great danger due

⁷² Baldwin, *Esther*, 79.

⁷³ Martin, “Esther,” 707.

⁷⁴ Arnold and Beyer, *Encountering the Old Testament*, 340.

⁷⁵ Martin, “Esther,” 707.

to Haman's plot. Therefore, Mervin Breneman states that "at this moment Esther's life purpose was at stake. God had guided in her being chosen, queen. In the biblical perspective, election is for service, not just for one's own benefit."⁷⁶

Summary of the Text

Mordecai's response to Esther has three elements: her own life is in danger; the Jews will be saved with or without her; and her very purpose in life is at stake.⁷⁷ In the Diaspora, where is the line between assimilating to survive and losing one's primary identity? The fact that this dilemma sits before the queen is significant. As queen, Esther is in one of the highest positions in foreign power. If she cannot ignore her Jewish identity, then no one can. Moreover, Mordecai's challenge reminds Esther and the reader that denying one's identity will not save you, even if you are a favored queen.⁷⁸ Mordecai could recognize that Esther may refuse the role of savior of her people in the crisis. Esther responds to Mordecai's challenge by choosing to act; she decides she will risk her life for that of her people. Her preparation involves fasting, which is the antithesis of the feast.⁷⁹ Mordecai warns her that if she fails to do this, she and her family will die, but help will nevertheless come from another place.⁸⁰ Therefore, the deliverance for God's people is ultimately in the hands of God.

⁷⁶ Breneman, "Esther," 337.

⁷⁷ Reid, *Esther*, 103-104.

⁷⁸ Fentress-Williams, "Esther," 491.

⁷⁹ Fentress-Williams, "Esther," 491.

⁸⁰ Richard S. Hess, *The Old Testament: A Historical, Theological and Critical Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2016), 369.

Esther risks her life (Est. 4:15-17), the writer records these words:

Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai, “Go, gather all the Jews to be found in Susa, and hold a fast on my behalf, and neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. I and my maids will also fast as you do. Then I will go to the king, though it is against the law; and if I perish, I perish.” Mordecai then went away and did everything as Esther had ordered him (Est. 4:15-17).

After Mordecai points out that either way she might be killed and that perhaps she comes to her present position for such a purpose as saving her people, Esther relents and agrees to appear before the king.⁸¹ Esther expresses her commitment by the phrase “if I perish, I perish.” This phrase shows that Esther understands the situation well as evidenced by her reply to Mordecai when she notes “if I perish, I perish.” She resolves to carry out the wishes of Mordecai and go to the king even if it means her death.⁸² Esther’s confession is a statement of courageous resolve to take responsibility. Her resolve rings in the words, “if I perish, I perish” (Est. 4:16).⁸³ She begins initiating plans of her own and she becomes a leader of her people. Then she declares, with quiet determination, “I will go to the king unlawfully, and if I perish, I perish,” (Est. 4:16).⁸⁴ This is meant as the end of the relationship, and Esther replies to Mordecai with courage and confidence in God’s will.⁸⁵

In the Old Testament, the religious use of fasting is often in connection with making a request before God. In this sense, the act of fasting is designed as a process

⁸¹ Moore, “Esther, Book of,” 633.

⁸² Martin, “Esther,” 707.

⁸³ Arnold and Beyer, *Encountering the Old Testament*, 341.

⁸⁴ Michael V. Fox, “Three Esthers,” in *The Book of Esther in Modern Research*, eds. Leonard J. Greenspoon and Sidnie White Crawford (New York, NY: T and T Clark International, 2003), 3.

⁸⁵ Mathews, “Esther,” 196.

leading to purification and humbling oneself before God (Ps. 69:10).⁸⁶ Esther accepts Mordecai's reasoning, but she needs spiritual support from her people. The imperatives "to gather" (*kanas* [3664, 4043]) and "to fast." A total fast without any food or water for three days shows the seriousness of the need for help.⁸⁷ Fasting is a means by which one denies one's own needs and focuses directly on one's relationship with God and the world.⁸⁸ She instructs Mordecai to gather all the Jews in Susa to fast on her behalf (NRSV, cf. NIV "for me"), indicating her own centrality in the emerging plan to secure their survival.⁸⁹ Esther's response and the fasting and prayer in which all of God's people participate for three days changes the heart of Esther and prepares her for what she must do. From a canonical biblical standpoint, it also begins the work of God to change the heart of the king and to order events toward the outcome to which the book leads.⁹⁰

Esther likely surrounds herself with Jewish maidens, or women who are proselytes to that religion.⁹¹ She gives orders only to servants and family members (the Jews of Susa being broadly construed as family members), and she fails to take power publicly.⁹² To solve this crisis, one person Esther has to put her reputation and life on the line for the sake of others. She counts the cost to herself and her people, and determines

⁸⁶ Matthews, Chavalas, and Walton, "Esther," 209.

⁸⁷ Smith, "Esther," 256.

⁸⁸ Breneman, "Esther," 338.

⁸⁹ Reid, *Esther*, 105.

⁹⁰ Hess, *The Old Testament*, 375.

⁹¹ Jamieson, "The Book of Esther," 305.

⁹² Sidnie White Crawford, "Esther and Judith: Contrasts in Character," in *The Book of Esther in Modern Research*, eds. Leonard J. Greenspoon and Sidnie White Crawford (New York, NY: T and T Clark International, 2003), 72.

to act courageously, even if it means that she might be killed (4:16).⁹³ Also, Mordecai is faithful in his role as intercessor and leader of his people.⁹⁴ From a dependent orphan, completely submissive to her uncle's manipulations and the king's whims, she emerges at the plot's end in control of her own life and the life of a nation.⁹⁵ The author of Esther sees the destruction of Haman as salvation from God, who pursues God's plan independent of human action.⁹⁶ The narrative addresses how certain believers respond to bad news, specifically the threat of death.⁹⁷

Summary

Therefore, summarizing is desirable for the purpose of describing how the study of Esther 4:1-17 is foundational to this Doctor of Ministry project. The Bible contains sixty-six books, and the Book of Esther is one of only two books of the Bible named after a woman. In general, the authorship of the book is unknown. The writer perhaps had thorough knowledge of Persian court life and customs in those days. The book of Esther presents an alternative view of Diaspora life in the Persian Empire. According to the book, Esther and Mordecai are the role models for succeeding in the Diaspora.

Esther 1:1 mentions the social-political setting of the book, in that the events of the book take place in the time of Persian King Xerxes (Ahasuerus) in 486-465 B.C. That would place the events between the completion of the temple construction under

⁹³ Smith, "Esther," 258.

⁹⁴ Smith, "Esther," 256.

⁹⁵ Anderson, *Esther*, 754.

⁹⁶ Chavalas, "Esther, Theology of," 208.

⁹⁷ Smith, "Esther," 256.

Zerubbabel (in 516 BC during the reign of Darius I) and the arrival of more returnees to Jerusalem under Ezra in 458 BC. It concerns the life of a group of Jews who, about fifty or sixty years after being allowed to return to Jerusalem, still find themselves in the eastern Persian Empire. The key persons include Haman along with Esther and Mordecai who displays God's act to save God's people in the foreign kingdom. The book is read during the festival of Purim in celebration of the deliverance of the Jews from oppression and death at the hand of their enemies (Est. 3:7; 9:24-26). Also, the book of Esther was a source of encouragement to persecuted Jews around the world for centuries.

After studying the biblical foundation passage on Esther 4:1-17, it stands out among the ten chapters in the book. Chapters one and two portray how Esther becomes queen in the Persian Empire. Also, chapter three presents Haman's plot and Mordecai's awareness of the situation. Chapter four continues the setting from the scene at the ending of chapter three by narrating how Mordecai learns of Haman's edict issued in the king's name to destroy all the Jews. Mordecai responds to Haman's edict by showing emotional mourning by wearing torn garments, sackcloth, and ashes at the King's palace. He fails to enter the palace. However, at first, Esther learns only of Mordecai's outward humiliation and sends new clothes that show she fails to understand his message or learn about the edict regarding the execution of the Jews in the Kingdom. Mordecai rejects Esther's concern for new clothes, but he sends a copy of the decree, and a report of the exact amount Haman promises to pay Ahasuerus. He requests Esther to go to the King for help. However, Esther responds to Mordecai that if she approaches the king without an invitation, she will be put to death. Therefore, Mordecai's responds to Esther and tells her that her own life is in danger, the Jews will be saved with or without her, and her very

purpose in life is at stake. Finally, Esther expresses her commitment by stating the phrase “if I perish, I perish.” Esther’s confession is a statement of courageous resolve to take responsibility. Esther’s response and the fasting and prayer in which all of God’s people participate for three days change the heart of Esther and prepare her for what she must do.

This Doctor of Ministry project on “Biblical Youth Care and Counseling to Cross Culture Among the American Myanmar Community” rests on a foundation of the chosen biblical text, Esther 4:1-17. The studies on Esther 4:12-17 are relevant to the American Myanmar Community context. This biblical exegesis highlights Mordecai and Esther as the model of a cross-culture community. Mordecai gives care and counseling to Esther to gain a royal position. Mordecai represents the life of the first generation in the foreign land and one could see Esther as part of the second generation in a cross-cultural community. Mordecai and Esther stand together in the cross-cultural kingdom where there are difficulties, problems, crises, misunderstanding, jealousy, and challenges in their daily lives. They become successful leaders for the people of God in the Persian Empire.

Thus, first-generation persons in the community of interest who settled in the United States as refugees must look back on the story of Esther in their present cultural crisis. The first generation must stand as caregivers or counselors like Mordecai. Also, the second generation must look at the example life of Esther, who accepts the counseling and challenge to act for the people of Jews in the foreign land. The second generation of American Myanmar youth must use their education, position, and wealth to build up a better community in the United States as well as in motherland Myanmar.

CHAPTER THREE

HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

The basis for this chapter is according to a quote from the book *Church History: An Introduction to Research Methods and Resources*, which notes, “The importance of history lies in the realm of the identification and definition of issues and of the cultivation of objectivity in judgment... The importance of history is the relationship to the graduate study of the Christian church and its tradition.”¹ Therefore, this chapter will engage the historical figure Adoniram Judson and the Adoniram Judson missionary movement to support this doctoral project entitled, “Biblical Youth Care and Counseling to Cross Culture Among the American Myanmar Community.” Furthermore, the biblical foundations chapter engages Esther 4: 1-17, which focuses on Mordecai’s caregiving and counseling to the second generation of Esther in the Persians Palace. This passage alludes to the importance of good cross-cultural relationships between the first- and second-generation communities, which today are lacking and needed in the American Myanmar Community.

With these two cultures existing within the respected family unit, which causes them to separate, the hypothesis for this doctoral project is if the American Myanmar

¹ James E. Bradley and Richard A. Muller, *Church History: An Introduction to Research Methods and Resources* (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 2016), 54.

Community is aware of cross-cultural misunderstandings, conflicts, and misconceptions through training, then there will be an understanding between the first and second generations that will bring them together in their daily living. The selection of Adoniram Judson as the historical figure is because his life was strongly connected to Myanmar church history, bears cross-culture barriers by making healthy communication and relationships within the American Myanmar community and experienced many cultural shocks as the first American missionary in Myanmar land. Therefore, it is accurate to say that Adoniram Judson, also known as the first Protestant missionary from North America to preach, is one of the memorable historical figures to the American Myanmar Community in the United States.

When studying the Myanmar churches historical movement, Adoniram Judson was not the first person who proclaimed the good news into the dark age in Myanmar. The gospel and Christianity have existed in Myanmar since the sixteenth century. Under Saint John De Brito and his Jesuit priests' missionary work, the Taungoo crown prince Natshinnaung was converted to Christianity. Later another king, Mindon Min, gave favor to Christian missionaries and built a church for them in Mandalay.² However, within Christianity, Adoniram Judson is considered the first significant missionary in the land of Myanmar. Judson and his first wife were among the first commissioned to be foreign missionaries in American history. He is the pioneer, founder, and beginner of Myanmar church history in the eighteenth century.

The presentation of this historical figure will be divided into five parts. The first part will present Adoniram Judson's family background. Secondly, it will present

² Thang Deih Lian, *When God Calls a Man: The Making of a Spiritual Leader* (Yangon, Hleda: Full Live Mission, 2019), 7.

Adoniram Judson's transformation until he became one of the missionaries in the foreign land, and thirdly it will highlight Adoniram Judson's first missionary journey to India. Fourthly, it will present Adoniram Judson's missionary movement in Myanmar. Lastly, it will summarize the foreign missionaries in Myanmar because Adoniram Judson remained the model of foreign missionaries in Myanmar today.

Family Background

Adoniram Judson was the firstborn son of Adoniram and Abigail Brown, born on August 9, 1788, in Malden, Massachusetts. His father was a minister of the Congregationalists in those days, and his mother was a homemaker and Christian activist in her local congregation. Judson had three siblings, Abigail Brown Judson, a younger brother named Elnathan, a surgeon in the United States Navy, and Mary, who died six months after birth. There were four places where Judson grew up, which are Wenham, Braintree, Plymouth, and Massachusetts. Judson could read at three years old, took navigation lessons at ten, studied theology as a child, and entered Providence College at sixteen or seventeen. Judson left home and entered Brown University in 1804 and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts and a Master of Arts in 1807. After graduating from Brown University, he joined Andover Theological Seminary in 1808, where he was part of the first class to graduate in 1810.³

Judson had three wives because of his mission mind upon the Myanmar people. They were Ann Hasseltine (1789-1826), of which he had two children, Sarah Hall Boradman (1803- 1845), of which he had seven children, and Emily Chubock (1817-

³ Fred Barlow, "Adoniram Judson: Father of Baptist Missionaries," Wholesome Words, <https://www.wholesomewords.org/missions/bjudson1.html>.

1854), of which he had one child.⁴ According to the research, Judson could have fathered ten children, but four of his children died during childbirth.⁵

Transformation

Spiritually, Judson was superlative because his father was a Congregational preacher, and despite his mother's tears and pleadings, he was not saved until he was twenty years old. Judson was greatly influenced by the Deistic beliefs of his friend Jacob Eames at Brown University. On his return home, he announced to his shocked parents his rejection of Christianity and left for New York to take up a career as a playwright. Judson rejected the faith of his parents and prided himself on being a skeptic. However, when his friend died, Judson realized the reality of death. He knew the religion of the Bible to be true as he felt its truth, and he was in despair.

In September 1809, when he was twenty-one years old, Judson heard a sermon on "The Star in the East" by Dr. Claudius Buchanan, a British East India Company chaplain. The text was taken from Matthew 2:2, which says "where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him," (ESV). This sermon fell like a spark into the tinder of Judson's soul. This was a calling for Judson to become a missionary in Asia countries, especially in Myanmar (Burma). He was converted at twenty-one and became a missionary to the heathen (an unreached place) at twenty-two years old.

⁴ William H. Brackney, "The Legacy of Adoniram Judson," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 22, no. 3 (1998): 122, *Gail Academic OneFile*, <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A54336544/AONE?u=upl1179&sid=AONE&xid=5ce9e431>.

⁵ Brackney, "The Legacy of Adoniram Judson," 123.

On February 6, 1812, Mr. Judson, Samuel Newell, Samuel Nott, Gordon Hall, and Luther Rice, were ordained as missionaries in the Tabernacle Church in Salem. Rev. Drs. Spring, Worcester, Woods, Morese, and Griffin ordained them. Having been ordained as a Congregational minister in 1812, Judson sailed for Calcutta, and on reaching Serampore, Judson became Baptist.

Missionary Journey to India

As a member of the Congregational Church, Judson campaigned effectively for establishing the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in 1810.⁶ Judson was ordained as a Congregational minister in 1812. On February 6, 1812, Judson and his five friends were commissioned missionaries by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, and they sailed for India immediately after commissioning. The following week, Ann and Judson sailed with Samuel and Harriet Newell on the Caravan from Salem, and Samuel and Roxanna Nott, along with Gordon Hall and Luther Rice, embarked from Philadelphia on the Harmony.⁷

Judson was translating the New Testament from Greek into English, and as he did so, he became convinced that complete immersion was scriptural. After arriving in Serampore, Judson and Nancy were baptized by William Ward, Carey's assistants.⁸ His intended work in India was hampered by the War of 1812 between Great Britain and the

⁶ N. P. Feldmeth, *Pocket Dictionary of Church History: Over 300 Terms Clearly and Concisely Defined* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsityPress Academic, 2008), 83.

⁷ Brackney, "The Legacy of Adoniram Judson," 123.

⁸ Domenic Marbaniang, "Adoniram Judson, Missionary to Burma," Research Gate, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/330959148_Adoniram_Judson_Missionary_to_Burma.

United States.⁹ During that period, India was not a welcoming place for Americans. The East India Company refused Judson. Therefore, Judson took advice from the English missionary, William Carey, to do ministry in Myanmar because he believed in baptism. Judson became a member of the Baptist and lost the financial support from the Congregationalists and the Baptists in America supported his mission. Consequently, the first Baptist Association in America that supported missionaries was formed because of Adoniram Judson. This might be why God sent Adoniram to India first before he became a minister to Myanmar. Although he was not allowed to do ministry in India, God sent him to the right place for his life in Myanmar. Looking back positively at Judson's missionary journey to India, he met William Carey, Joshua Marshman, and William Ward in Serampore, India. He viewed firsthand their long-term efforts to translate scripture and other language tools into Indian languages and dialects.¹⁰ Thus, Judson might have learned the mission strategies from his journey to India which affects his ministry in Myanmar.

Missionary Movement in Myanmar (Burma)

Myanmar is one of the Southeast Asian countries, and the neighboring countries are China, Laos, Thailand, India, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Cambodia, and the Philippines. Myanmar is divided into seven divisions and seven states. The total land area of Myanmar is 667,000 square kilometers (261,228 square miles), measuring 936 kilometers (581 miles) from east to west and 2,051 kilometers (1,275

⁹ Feldmeth, *Pocket Dictionary of Church History*, 83-84.

¹⁰ Brackney, "The Legacy of Adoniram Judson," 122.

miles) from north to south. Most of the people are Bamars, from which the British took the name Burma. There are 130 ethnic groups recorded in the country. Myanmar is basically a country of agriculture. At the time of the arrival of Mr. and Mrs. Judson, the population numbered from six to eight million, but this included only the ruling race. According to the Myanmar Population 2023, live record, there are 54.6 million people in Myanmar.¹¹ Today there are four main religions in Myanmar: Buddhism 80.1%, Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism. According to the Harvard Divinity School record, Christianity is 8.2 % in the country.¹²

The British government invaded the land of Myanmar in the First Anglo-Burmese War from 1824 to 1826, the Second Anglo-Burmese War of 1852, and the Third Anglo-Burmese War of 1885. The superior British Indian military power defeated the armies of the kings of the Konbaung Dynasty in the nineteenth century. Myanmar received its independence from the British government in 1948.

Notably, an American traveler who passed through Myanmar about the time of the arrival of the Judsons, described Yangon as:

A miserable, dirty town, containing eight thousand or ten thousand inhabitants, the houses were being built with bamboo and teak planks, with thatched roofs almost without drainage, and intersected by muddy creeks, through which the tide flowed at high water. It had altogether a mean, uninviting appearance, but it was the city of government of an extensive province ruled over by a viceroy, a woongee of the empire, in high favor at the court.¹³

¹¹ Myanmar Population 2023, “Live,” World Population Review, <https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/myanmar-population>.

¹² Christianity in Myanmar, <https://rpl.hds.harvard.edu/faq/christianity-myanmar>.

¹³ Edward Judson, “Adoniram Judson: A Biography,” Wholesome Words, <https://www.wholesomewords.org/missions/bjudson.pdf>.

This description clearly depicts the conditions of Myanmar during the time of Mr. Judson's visit.

Overview of His Mission in Myanmar

After permission to continue into the territories of the East India Company, Judson was refused, and he went to Mauritius and Rangoon in 1813.¹⁴ Taking the advice of the English missionary William Carey, Judson began to minister in Burma.¹⁵ The Judson took possession of the English Baptist Mission house, which was occupied by Dr. Carey's son.¹⁶ After a few months in the English Baptist Mission house, they moved to a location of the city proper because the mission house was half a mile from Yangon, which was near the place of public execution, where the refuse of the city streets was thrown, and not far from the place where the dead were buried.¹⁷ Judson and his wife Ann lived in Yangon City of Myanmar from 1813-1823 and started the ministry there.

On January 25, 1815, Mrs. Judson was having health problems and went to Madras, India because there were no physicians for them to consult in Myanmar. She was absent from Mr. Judson for three months. Subsequently, Roger William was born on September 11, 1815, but died in May the following year at seven months and twenty-three days. The child William could be considered one of the first missionaries buried in Myanmar. Judson and his wife Ann went through all the bitter experiences for Christ in

¹⁴ F. L. Cross and Elizabeth A. Livingstone, eds., *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 3rd rev. ed. (Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press, 2005), 914.

¹⁵ Feldmeth, *Pocket Dictionary of Church History*, 84.

¹⁶ Edward Judson, *Adoniram Judson: A Biography* (Philadelphia, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, 1894), 31.

¹⁷ Judson, *Adoniram Judson*, 59.

Myanmar. There may have been a lot of questions regarding their loss, but they did not give up and continued to serve God.

After three years in Myanmar, on July 13, 1816, Judson completed a book entitled *Grammatical Notices of the Burman Language*. On July 30, 1816, he completed another book entitled, *A View of the Christian Religion in Three Parts: Historic, Didactic, and Perceptive*. However, there was no printing press in the country of Myanmar at the time of Mr. Judson's stay there. Therefore, Rev. Hough's family brought the printing press to Myanmar on October 15, 1816.

“On May 20, 1817, Mr. Judson completed the translation of the Gospel of Matthew. This marks the first stage in this monumental task of translating the whole Bible into Burmese. Two days later, he began to compile a Burmese dictionary.”¹⁸ Based on the significant contributions made by Mr. Judson, one could affirm he offered his knowledge and abilities to the Myanmar people. The translation of the Gospel of Matthew was the first-ever gospel that the Myanmar people received and read in their hands, and the Burmese dictionary is the first-ever Burmese to English Dictionary in Myanmar country. Therefore, the hard work of Mr. Judson was not only for Christianity but also for the people of Myanmar.

From Christmas day in 1817 until July 16, 1818, no word came to Mrs. Judson from her husband, whom she had expected to be separated only for a few weeks. She spent part of her time teaching to about thirty Burmese women. Thus, Mrs. Judson was not merely an ordinary woman but a faithful woman to God and her husband.

¹⁸ Judson, *Adoniram Judson*, 67.

“It was on June 17, 1819, about seven years and four months after Mr. Judson’s life America, and about six years after his arrival in Yangon, that he was permitted to baptize the first Burmese convert, MOUNG NAU.”¹⁹ His journal records notes, “Oh, may it prove to be the beginning of a series of baptisms in the Burman empire which shall continue in uninterrupted success to the end of the age.”²⁰ It took seven years for Mr. Judson and his wife Ann to convert one man for the Lord. Although this was not the last person in Myanmar, it was the beginning for the Myanmar people. The time may have taken much longer than expected, but conversions followed with MOUNG BYAA, MOUNG THAHLAH, MOUNG ING and MOUNG SHAW-GNONG, who received Jesus as their personal Savior and Lord.

“On December 21, 1819, Mr. Judson and Mr. Colman, leaving their wives alone in Yangon, began their journey up the Irawadi to Ava, the capital of the empire.”²¹ Mr. Judson was a person who was always seeking a new place to build the church. The reason they went to Ava was to pursue the king of Myanmar. There were questions by the king presented to Mr. Judson, “why do you ask for such permission? Have not the Portuguese, the English, the Mussulmans, and people of all other religions have full liberty to practice and worship according to their own customs?”²² Based on the king’s questions, there was a difference between Judson and other missionaries or religions. Furthermore, the king proved that there were also Portuguese and English missionaries in those days.

¹⁹ Judson, *Adoniram Judson*, 65.

²⁰ Barlow, “Adoniram Judson,” <https://www.wholesomewords.org/missions/bjudson1.html>.

²¹ Judson, *Adoniram Judson*, 68.

²² Judson, *Adoniram Judson*, 14.

Mr. and Mrs. Judson left Yangon on July 19, 1820, due to Mrs. Judson's health and arrived at Calcutta on August 18, 1820. They headed back to Yangon again on November 23 and arrived on January 5, 1821.²³ This indicated there were no good hospitals in Myanmar and also the known standard in Myanmar. Mr. Judson sent his wife to America, and she arrived there on September 25, 1822. She remained in America until June 22, 1823. She was okay to return to Yangon and arrived on December 15, 1823, when she joined her husband after being away from him for two years and three months.

In 1822, Myanmar King Bakyidaw asked Adoniram Judson about Christian Burmans, and he asked, "are they real Burmese (Burman)? Do they dress like other Burmese (Burmans)?"²⁴ Based on these questions, King Bakyidaw expressed concern about the identity of Christianity and the culture of the Myanmar people. The king's questions might be very helpful for Adoniram Judson to approach the local people about respecting their identity and culture.

"Mr. Judson and Dr. Price spent five months in Ava and returned to Yangon in February 1823. During this time, he completed the translation of the New Testament into Burmese."²⁵ Indeed, Mr. Judson delivered the word of God to the people of Myanmar by translating the Bible into the Burmese version.

In 1824, Judson moved to Ava, the royal city in those days, where Judson was prisoned as a suspected spy for the British government. This imprisonment was the result of the Anglo-Burmese War, and Judson spent twenty-one months in prison. When his

²³ Judson, *Adoniram Judson*, 79.

²⁴ Pum Za Mang, *Buddhist Nationalism and Burmese Christianity* (Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 175.

²⁵ Judson, *Adoniram Judson*, 87.

wife Ann became sick in 1825, he sent her back to the United States but remain on the mission field in Myanmar himself. When there was peace between British and Burmese Commissioners on February 24, 1826, Judson was set free and returned to Yangon on March 21, 1826.²⁶ However, Judson received a sealed letter on November 4, 1826, informing him of the passing of his wife. This letter was painful and tearful for him.

At thirty-seven years old, Mrs. Judson breathed her last breath on October 24, 1826. Edward Judson said that “no missionary was with her when she died to speak words of Christian consolation. The Burmese converts like children gathered helplessly and broken-hearted about their white mamma.”²⁷ Her death was too early for God to take her away from the Myanmar people and her family. She could have been longing and waiting for her husband to return until her last breath. When Mr. Judson returned to Amherst on January 24, 1827, “the native Christians greeted him with the voice of lamentation for the death of Mrs. Judson. His motherless baby had been tenderly cared for by Mrs. Wade.”²⁸ How painful and sorrowful it must have been for Mr. Judson to see his baby without their mother. There may not be words to express his broken heart to the world.

Unfortunately, little Maria died on April 24, 1827. Mr. Judson writes, “my little daughter Maria breathed her last, aged two years and three months, and her emancipated spirit fled, I trust, to the arms of her fond mother.”²⁹ This is the third member of Mr. Judson’s family that he buried in Myanmar land. After his wife and two children died,

²⁶ Judson, *Adoniram Judson*, 95.

²⁷ Judson, *Adoniram Judson*, 101.

²⁸ Judson, *Adoniram Judson*, 101.

²⁹ Judson, *Adoniram Judson*, 102.

Mr. Judson may have felt alone in the world. Mr. Judson received yet more news that his seventy-five-year-old father died on November 26, 1826.

Mr. Judson moved to Moulmein from Amherst in 1827, where he spent time there until 1835. He received news that his brother Elnathan passed away on December 15, 1829. Mr. Judson reported 143 baptisms, which amounted to 563 baptisms since his arrival in Burma, with only seventeen excluded from this number. On October 31, 1835, his daughter Abby Ann was born, and on April 7, 1837, his son Adoniram Brown Judson was born. Mr. Judson went to English Baptists of Calcutta and Serampore due to his health on February 19, 1839.³⁰

On October 24, 1840, Judson finished the last sheet of the new edition of the whole Burmese Bible. President Francis Wayland commented on his Bible translation, “as Luther’s Bible is now in the hands of Protestant Germany, so three centuries hence, Judson’s Bible will be the Bible of the Christian churches of Burma.”³¹ This statement is being fulfilled in Myanmar today.

Mr. and Mrs. Judson, with three older children, Abby, Adoniram, and Elnathan, went back to America on April 26, 1845. However, the younger children Henry, Charles, and Edward were left in Myanmar. They returned to Moulmein on November 30, 1846.³² They moved back to Yangon from Moulmein on February 15, 1847. Also, on December 24, 1847, Emily Frances Judson was born in Moulmein.

³⁰ Judson, “Adoniram Judson,” <https://www.wholesomewords.org/missions/bjudson.pdf>.

³¹ Judson, *Adoniram Judson*, 131.

³² Judson, *Adoniram Judson*, 158.

On April 12, 1850, Mr. Judson died, and they buried him the same way they buried his boy in the sea without a prayer. He died within a week of the time that he departed with his wife, and after almost four months of terrible suspense, she learned of his death.³³ Therefore, A.Z. Hall states that “David Livingstone, whose great heart was buried under a tree in darkest Africa, or Adoniram Judson who gave his life for the Burmese.”³⁴ His first wife, Ann Hasseltine, and his second wife, Sarah Boardman, gave him notable assistance in his work and are remembered on their own account.³⁵ Judson wanted to be remembered for his observation, “The future is as bright as the promises of God.”³⁶

The Significant Contributions of Adoniram

Adoniram Judson was the author of a series of tracts in Burmese from 1816-1824, catechetical works from 1817-1827, and published letters from 1816-1832. Additionally, Adoniram Judson other works include:

- 1808 *Elements of English Grammar*
- 1812 *Christian Baptism: A Sermon Preached in the Lall Barzaar Chapter, Calcutta.*
- 1826 *Dictionary of the Burman Language, with Explanations in English.*
- 1829 *Memoir of Mee Shway-ee.*
- *The Golden Balance or The Christian and Buddhist System Contrasted.*

³³ Judson, *Adoniram Judson*, 171.

³⁴ A. Z. Hall, “Cross and Caduceus,” *Christianity Today* 5, no. 9 (1961): 347.

³⁵ Cross, *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 914.

³⁶ Brackney, “The Legacy of Adoniram Judson,” 122.

- 1839 *A View of the Christian Religion*.
- 1840 *The Holy Bible (in Burmese)*. The complete Burmese Bible translated from the original Greek and Hebrew, not from a translation.
- 1840 *Digest of Scripture in Peguan*.
- 1842 He began to work on a Burmese Dictionary, which he completed in 1849.
- 1852 *Burman and English Dictionary*.

His Burmese-English Dictionary is still widely used today. Notably, he became a Burmese to win the Burmese people and he mastered the language of Burmese and Pali.

Foreign Missionaries in Myanmar Today

Since Myanmar did not allow missionaries to enter the country during Mr. Judson's time, foreign missionaries still face the same challenges to enter Myanmar, but by God's grace, there are many foreign missionaries in Myanmar. God had sent missionaries to Myanmar from America, Australia, England, Germany, China, and Korea. Today, most of the foreign missionaries are Korean. The foreign missionaries enter Myanmar with a Visiting Visa or Business Visa because the government does not permit Religious Visas in Myanmar. This is one of the problems foreign missionaries face.

Many missionaries fail on the mission field in Myanmar because they did not learn the culture and languages of Myanmar, and they did not respect the local ministers within their congregations. Sometimes, it is difficult to determine if they are missionaries in Myanmar or just there for business?" Additionally, from personal observations, some

of the local ministers mistreat foreign missionaries in Myanmar. Many of them just built their own kingdom but not the kingdom of God. Therefore, it is not easy to find a person like Mr. Judson, who served more than thirty years in Myanmar.

Conclusion

This conclusion will begin with introducing a quote from George Smith, “Adoniram Judson is surpassed by no missionary since the Apostle Paul in self-devotion and scholarship, in labors and perils, in saintliness and humility, in the result of his toils on the future of an empire and its multitudinous people.”³⁷ George Smith’s statement is accurate in comparing Adoniram Judson to the Apostle Paul as there are some similarities between them. The Apostle Paul was a Pharisee with a background from the tribe of Benjamin and educated under the great Gamaliel in Jerusalem. Paul was a persecutor of Christ’s church and then transformed into the Apostle of Christ for the rest of his life. He served Christ by writing, preaching, and teaching during his missionary journey.

Additionally, Judson was born and grew up in a family of Congregationalist ministers, Adoniram Judson and Abigail Brown. Academically, he was an educated man who graduated from Brown University and Andover Theological Seminary. Spiritually, he was superlative because he rejected Christianity and became a Deistic through his college friend. He accepted Christ after the death of his friend and met with Moses Stuart, a theological professor at Andover Theological Seminary. During this time, he met and married Ann Hasseltine, a schoolteacher from Bradford, Massachusetts. They were sent as missionaries to India by the Congregational church. However, Judson became part of the Baptist denomination adapting to the doctrine of baptism. and was baptized in India.

³⁷ Robert H. Glover, *The Progress of World-Wide Mission* (New York, NY: George H. Doran Company, 1924), 108.

God used the East India Company to prevent Judson from ministry there because India was not the right place for him. Therefore, Judson's mission field changed to Myanmar where he and his wife served God and the people of Myanmar for the rest of their lives.

Judson planned to conduct evangelistic and church planting ministries but soon realized the enormity of the language and cultural differences. These differences led him to first prioritize his translation work of scriptures and suitable tracts for evangelical purposes. He wrote to a friend in the United States about his main purpose, "my only objective is to prosecute in a still, quiet manner the study of the language, trusting that for all the future, God will provide."³⁸ This statement revealed the intentions of Adoniram Judson for the people of Myanmar. He was not just an ordinary missionary to Myanmar but a writer, translator, preacher, teacher, and leader of the new Christianity of Myanmar. Likewise, the first-generation of the American Myanmar Community is facing the same challenges that Judson experienced in Myanmar. Judson was struggling and facing language and culture gaps when he arrived in Myanmar.

The name of Judson might be mentioned in many places in Myanmar and the United States, but the heart and mind of Judson are missing where his name is written. He might not be pleased to have his name mentioned only as a memorial stone. The first priority will undoubtedly be his heart for Myanmar. A missionary buried in the sea is the only one who sacrificed his life for Christ in Myanmar. The British took the land of Myanmar and its precious things, but the American Judson gave his life, knowledge, family, and ability to Myanmar. The British government was interested in worldly things,

³⁸ Brackney, "The Legacy of Adoniram Judson," 122.

but the American Mr. Judson looked after spiritual things. The seed that he sowed in the land of Myanmar shall grow all over the country.

Although I do not belong to the Baptist denomination in Myanmar, I have chosen to write my historical foundation on Adoniram and his missionary movement in Myanmar because my D. Min. project addresses “Biblical Youth Care and Counseling to Cross Culture Among the American Myanmar Community.” The purpose of studying the life of Adoniram Judson is to provide the model lifestyle of Judson in Myanmar to the American Myanmar Community. I wish all the youth educated in the United States to serve God and the nation as Judson had served God and the Myanmar people for the rest of his life.

CHAPTER FOUR

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

Before introducing the theological foundation for this doctoral project entitled, “Biblical Youth Care and Counseling to Cross Culture Among the American Myanmar Community,” it is necessary to establish the relevancy of the biblical and historical foundation chapters that influenced the selected theology for this doctoral project.

The text for the biblical foundation is Esther 4: 1-17, highlighting Mordecai and Esther as the model of a cross-culture community. This text is relevant to the American Myanmar Mission Church in Fort Worth, Texas, because the church and community are experiencing cross-cultural issues. The leadership and counseling to Esther is an excellent example for the first generation of the American Myanmar, and the life of Esther is a model to the second generation in the community.

The historical foundation introduces Adoniram Judson as the historical figure for this chapter. The intention for this selection was to connect the relevancy between the context and this historical figure. Adoniram Judson was a memorable historical figure of Myanmar Christianity because he was the first American missionary to the country of Myanmar and the first Protestant missionary to preach the Gospel to the dark land of Myanmar. Moreover, his contributions and self-sacrifices for the life of the people of Myanmar are relevant to the American Myanmar Mission Church in Fort Worth, Texas.

Therefore, this historical figure supports the hypothesis for this doctoral project that if there is awareness and teaching on the cross-cultural issues from the perspective of pastoral care and counseling to the immigrated community, then the cultural problems could be solved.

Henceforth, this chapter will engage the minjung movement and theology. The word “minjung” is a unique concept of Koreans. It is possible to say the Minjung Theology was the first theology to discuss the question of the poor and the practices of the liberation of the oppressed. First, this chapter will introduce the background of the minjung movement in South Korea. It will present the Minjung language, political background, religious background, and the rise of the minjung movement. It will also introduce the selected minjung theologians, Kim Chai-Choon, Ahn Byung-Mu, Suh Nam-Dong, because they are the founding fathers of minjung movement and its theology. In order to understand, it is necessary to introduce a short biography of the minjung theologians.

Additionally, this chapter will present the primary concerns of Minjung Theology. However, to accurately present the Minjung Theology, it was necessary to separate it into subsections. Although it may not cover all the concerns of the Korean minjung theologies, it will cover most of their theologies. It will also present a critique of the Minjung Theology because there is weakness and strength in every theology. Finally, the summary will focus on how the minjung theological movements, and their theologies are foundational to this doctoral project.

The Language of Minjung Theology

Etymologically, the term “Minjung” is a combination of two Chinese characters, ‘min’ meaning people and ‘jung’ meaning the mass, the crowd.¹ Minjung means theology of the masses. It is political, a people’s theology of liberation, and it is about people who are dominated by oppressive political power. It reflects the cultural milieu of Koreans as they have prevailed over oppression and suffering.² The phrase minjung-like nation refers to the minjung and the nation who were grief-stricken under colonial rule, exploited by foreign powers, and oppressed by the ruling class in their own country. For these reasons, the word minjung corresponds to all three meanings.³ Therefore, the minjung are politically oppressed, economically exploited, socially alienated, and culturally and intellectually kept uneducated and agents who change society and history.

Furthermore, the term was used in the fourteenth century during the Yi Dynasty to describe those excluded from the ruling Yangban class.⁴ The minjung are those who have suffered from exploitation, poverty, socio-political oppression, and cultural repression throughout the ages. They know the pain of dehumanization.⁵ According to Yeong Mee Lee, “Minjung is a Korean term for those who are marginalized from the center of society

¹ John Parratt, *The Other Jesus: Christology in Asian Perspective* (Oxford, NY: Peter Lang, Wien, 2012), 110.

² M. Davie et al., eds., *New Dictionary of Theology: Historical and Systematic*, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2016), 497.

³ Ahn Byung-Mu, *Stories of Minjung Theology: The Theological Journey of Ahn Byung-Mu in His Own Words* (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature Press, 2019), 28.

⁴ R. S. Sugirtharajah, *Jesus in Asia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018), 201.

⁵ A. Sung Park, “Minjung Theology: A Korean Contextual Theology,” 2, https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/ijt/33-4_001.pdf.

because of economic, cultural, social, and gender discrimination.”⁶ Minjung is a term that refers to people who have been excluded in various ways, from the pains that arise from inescapable human conditions, from the sufferings that arise from individual and or collective human evil, as well as from the pains of social systems invisible to the eyes of individuals, such as neoliberal capitalism.⁷

The term “Han:” The Korean term for suffering is the word, Han. The meaning is “a feeling of the depression and nothingness, but it also contains a hope for a better future, giving one’s will to live in the awful conditions of an unjust world.”⁸ Suh Kwang-Suh David defines Han, “the word Han is representing a feeling of collective pain and suffering perpetuated in Korean culture. Han is a Korean word for political and psychological feeling, sometimes translated as regret, anger, grudge, resentment, bitter feelings, stress or rancor.”⁹

According to Kwon Jin-Kwan, “Han is related to the question of justice. Han is not caused by pain, suffering, and poverty, but by injustice, whose important component is the denial of recognition and participation of the weak people as equals.”¹⁰ Han designates a dual nature of the Korean Minjung, that they are both the oppressed ones who suffered from the exploitation of the authorities, and because of this experience of

⁶ Yeong Mee Lee, “Korean Minjung Theology and Interpretation of the Bible,” Centre for Theology and Ministry, <https://ctm.uca.edu.au/lay-ministries/minjung-theology/>.

⁷ Jung Mo Sung, “Minjung Theology and the Social Aphasia: A Dialogue with the Liberation Theology,” *Madang* 31 (June 2019): 3-34, https://www.academia.edu/40069007/Minjung_Theology_and_the_Social_Aphasia_A_Dialogue_with_the_Liberation_Theology.

⁸ Vedran Golijanin, “Jesus Christ and the Minjung in Korean Liberation Theology,” 66, https://www.academia.edu/12598100/Jesus_Christ_and_the_Minjung_in_Korean_Liberation_Theology.

⁹ Jin-Kwan Kwon and Volker Kuster, eds., *Minjung Theology Today: Contextual and Intercultural Perspective* (Leipzig, Germany: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2018), 22.

¹⁰ Kwon, *Minjung Theology Today: Contextual and Intercultural Perspectives*, 51-53.

oppression, the people of hope from whom arises the agents of resistance.¹¹ Lee In-Mee strengthens the meaning of Han: “And Han does not coexist with untruth. Therefore, Han makes men and women search for living within the truth.”¹²

The Background of the Minjung Movement in South Korea

Political Background

After the Korean War in 1953, South Korea went through intense political turmoil. The military took over the government, and through a series of coup d'états, the military-backed government continued until 1988.¹³ Park Jung-Hee grabbed power at gunpoint in a 1961 coup, right after the student revolution on April 19, 1960, which toppled the Rhee Syng-Man dictatorial government. Park Jung-Hee ruled Korea for eighteen years with an iron fist, pushing the policies of high-speed economic development with anti-communist ideology and national security against North Korea.¹⁴ Minjung Theology was born under the Yushin (Revitalizing Reform) system. The Yushin system is the name for the fourth republic, the republic after the third constitution was officially changed. In this system, the three powers of administration, legislation, and judicature were all at the president's discretion. The new constitution did not respect the basic rights of citizens and allowed the president to serve unlimited consecutive terms.

¹¹ Kwon, *Minjung Theology Today*, 149.

¹² Kwon, *Minjung Theology Today*, 121.

¹³ C. H. Kim, “The Problem of Poverty in Post-War Korean Christianity,” *Transformation* 24, no. 1 (January 2007), <https://journals-sagepub-com.dtl.idm.oclc.org/doi/pdf/10.1177/026537880702400107>.

¹⁴ Kwon, *Minjung Theology Today*, 15.

Therefore, it was criticized for being the instrument of President Park Jeong-Hui's permanent dictatorship. The Yushin system came to a practical end when Park was assassinated on October 26, 1979.¹⁵ Park is praised for his contribution to the rapid economic growth of Korea but is criticized for his brutal suppression of democracy.¹⁶ After Park's assassination, provided the context for the rise of the modern Minjung Movement and its Christian theology.¹⁷

Religious Background

There are three major religions in Korea, Confucianism, Buddhism, and Christianity. Korean religious studies primarily focused on the two mainstream religions in Korean history, Buddhism, and later Confucianism. These religions have traditionally been associated with the ruling class. They have been adopted by their rulers as official religions and used to give legitimacy to their actions. In the last century, Christianity has been added to these religions as a major stream within Korea.¹⁸

Buddhism came from China 1500 years ago. The three kingdoms and the Koryo kingdoms were dominated by Buddhist beliefs and culture. The majority of Korean people still regard themselves as Buddhists, while Buddhism is felt to be a native Korean

¹⁵ Byung-Mu, *Stories of Minjung Theology*, 10.

¹⁶ Byung-Mu, *Stories of Minjung Theology*, 17.

¹⁷ Kevin P. Considine and Kim Chi-Ha's, "'Han' Anthropology and its Challenge to Catholic Thought," *Academia*, 51, https://www.academia.edu/7595531/Kim_Chi_Ha_s_Han_Anthropology_and_its_Challenge_to_Catholic_Thought.

¹⁸ Sang Taek Lee, *Religion and Social Formation in Korea: Minjung and Millenarianism* (Boston, MA: De Gruyter, 2012), 1.

religion because of its long history in Korea and its adoption to Korean culture and other religions.¹⁹

Confucianism entered Korea 500 years ago and controlled the Yi Dynasty until it fell with the Japanese occupation. Traditional Korean society might be regarded as a monologue society, based on a Confucian scale of ethics, which places great importance on hierarchy. In the Korean context, it is the following:

- (a) Government posts,
- (b) Economic, cultural and educational posts,
- (c) Emphasis on promotion,
- (d) Holding power, authority and high positions.

Confucian society had a strong class system. To hold any of these positions is to be a member of the upper classes. The middle class are farmers and commercial people. The lower class is made up of servants and laborers, which the higher classes always have many benefits within the society. A teaching central to Confucianism is the need for children always to respect and be devoted to their parents.²⁰

The Rise of Minjung Movement and Its Theology

First, the minjung theologians like to point to the Tonghak revolution in 1894 as their foundation. In the Tonghak revolution, the oppressed minjung defined themselves as subjects of their own history and destiny. Second, minjung theologians tried to find their spirit in the March First Independence Movement in 1919 against Japan. Thirdly,

¹⁹ Lee, *Religion and Social Formation in Korea*, 60.

²⁰ Lee, *Religion and Social Formation in Korea*, 53.

minjung theologians regard the April Nineteenth Revolution of Students against the government of President Lee as another root. Minjung theologians interpret these events as minjung's struggle for liberation stimulated by Christianity.²¹

The minjung movement produced an interpretation of Korean history as a history of suffering and resistance of the minjung people as they faced centuries of Chinese hegemony, the Japanese colonization (1905-1945), the division of the country (1945), and the painful war between the two Koreas (1950-1953). In 1970, under the military dictatorship and the oppression of workers, there was a cultural renaissance, which strengthened the workers and students' movements.²² AhnByung-Mu, Suh Nam-Dong, and Kim Yong-Bok analyzed the socio-political-economic situation and interpreted the Bible as a minjung book. They affirmed that Jesus was a minjung of his time in Palestine.²³ In 1978, just three years after Suh Nam-Dong first coined the term Minjung Theology, several theologians like him participated in the Christian Conference of Asia in Singapore and officially presented their Minjung Theology to the rest of the world. By 1981, this Christian Conference of Asia edited and published a book of writings by minjung theologians.²⁴

²¹ Eunsoo Kim, "Minjung Theology in Korea: A Critique from a Reformed Theological Perspective," 64, <https://nirc.nanzan-u.ac.jp/nfile/4182>.

²² Sung, "Minjung Theology and the Social Aphasia," 3-34.

²³ Sung, "Minjung Theology and the Social Aphasia," 8.

²⁴ Peter Moody, "From Prison to Presidency: The Premillennial Origins of Korean Minjung Theology and Its Postmillennial Resolution of Haan," Academia, https://www.academia.edu/7163977/From_Prison_to_Presidency_The_Premillennial_Origins_of_Korean_Minjung_Theology_and_its_Postmillennial_Resolution_of_Haan.

Selected Minjung Theologians

Kim Chai-Choon (1901-1987)

The Korean theological struggle cannot be appropriately understood without considering the influence of Rev. Dr. Kim Chai-Choon. He was a founding father of the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK). Kim Chai-Choon is widely regarded as the first committed liberal-minded theologian of the Korean Protestant Church.²⁵

Kim Yong-Bok

Kim Yong-Bok, a leading spokesperson of Minjung Theology, understands minjung as those dominated by the powerful women politically dominated by men, an ethnic group and a race dominated by a ruling race, intellectuals suppressed by the powerful military elite, workers, and framers. In Yong-Bok's words, the minjung "...are the have-nots... They suffer political suppression, economic exploitation, social humiliation, and cultural alienation."²⁶ Yong-Bok sees the minjung as members of a new community of the liberated.

Ahn Byung-Mu (1922-1996)

Ahn Byung-Mu was a person of faith and an intellectual who fought against injustice. He started three churches, established four journals, and successfully ran one of

²⁵ Paul S. Chung and Kim Kyong-Jae, eds., *Asian Contextual Theology for the Third Millennium* (Cambridge, UK: Lutterworth Press, 2007), 2.

²⁶ Deane William Fenn, *Third World Liberation Theologies: An Introductory Survey* (Maryknoll NY: Orbis Books, 1986), 97.

the most prominent institutes of theological study in Korea. These churches, journals, and institutes made a significant contribution to the advancement of Korean democracy and human rights.

Byung-Mu started teaching at Hanshin University in 1970 and retired in 1987. Since 1975, Byung-Mu led the Minjung Theology movement together with Suh Nam-Dong and others. Due to his resistance, he was expelled from his university position twice over nine years, which included a period of imprisonment. While in prison, between 1976 and 1977, he developed a heart condition. In 1980, after being expelled from his university position for the second time, he organized a minjung studies workshop with other professors who were also dismissed from their positions. This workshop invigorated Minjung studies in economics, history, sociology, literature, and education. In 1985, his health deteriorated and became life-threatening.

Suh Nam-Dong

Suh Nam-Dong is a pioneer or founding father of Minjung Theology. He was the Professor of Systematic Theology at Yonsei University. Suh Nam Dong regards the minjung as central to the development of Korean Theology. He was one of the interpreters of Western Theology in Korea, to a creator of Korean Minjung Theology for the world. Suh Nam-Dong is not only a great theologian, but now he is one of the important people in world Christianity.

The Basic Concerns of Minjung Theology

Not Based on the Latin American Liberation Theologies

The minjung are downtrodden people. Minjung Theology comes from the socio-political biography of the people of Korea. It does not arise from the Latin American Liberation theologies but from the Korean-Asian situational context. It transcends history expressed in a religious form. According to Paul S. Chung, “Asian Minjung Theology refers to a Korean contextual theology of suffering people that arose out of the Christian response to the South Korean social and political reality in the 70s and 80s.”²⁷

What is the Minjung Theology?

The Minjung, masses of people, Theology is a form of situational theology in South Korea developed to deal with socio-political issues in the country. The present religious situation in South Korea cannot be fully understood apart from the impact of the Minjung Theology. The Minjung Theology, which is a Korean version of Liberation Theology, takes into consideration the cries and groans of the suffering people known as “Han” because the minjung, masses of people, are politically oppressed, powerless, and economically exploited.²⁸

As previously mentioned, minjung means theology of the masses. It is political, a people’s theology of liberation, and it is about people who are dominated by oppressive political power. It reflects the cultural milieu of Koreans as they have prevailed over

²⁷ Chung, *Asian Contextual Theology for the Third Millennium*, 1.

²⁸ Bong Rin Ro, “Theological Trends in Asia,” *Themelios* 13, no. 2 (1988): 56, Logos Bible Software.

oppression and suffering.²⁹ Minjung Theology has been described as a socio-theological biography of the Korean people, expressed in indigenous drama and story, rather than in abstract intellectual categories.³⁰ Now, the task for Korean Minjung Theology is... to participate in and interpret theologically the events which we consider to be God's intervention in history and the work of the Holy Spirit.³¹

David Kwang-Sun Suh said,

When we participated in the protest movement against the military dictatorships, we became politically oppressed ourselves. We first acted politically for human rights and for democracy. Of course, we acted politically with the Christian faith and with theological conviction. In this sense, our action was a political-theological action. We did not have Minjung Theology in our head first, and then went out into the streets and acted. But we did do action first and then came back to our meetings and to our desks and theologically reflected on our action. Our doing theology was part of the cycle of action and reflection. Therefore, Minjung Theology is first and foremost a situational and contextual theology.³²

Hong Lei Lee defines the concept of Minjung Theology as, “minjung theologians have realized that they cannot and should not exist apart from the individual dimension of Christian faith and the unjust economic, social, and political realities of Korea.”³³

²⁹ Davie, *New Dictionary of Theology*, 497.

³⁰ Eric J. Sharpe, *Religion and Social Formation in Korea: Minjung and Millenarianism* (Boston, MA: De Gruyter, 2012), x.

³¹ Suh Nam-Dong, *Minjung Theology: People as the Subjects of History* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983), 177.

³² Volker Kuster, *A Protestant Theology of Passion: Korean Minjung Theology Revisited* (Boston, MA: Leiden Brill, 2010), xiii.

³³ Hong Lei Lee, *The Comparative Study of the Christology in Latin American Liberation Theology Korean Minjung Theology* (Glasgow, UK: The University of Glasgow, 1990), 155.

The Common Concept of Minjung in Scholarship

1. The minjung are the subjects of history and a social reality.
2. The Minjung are oppressed people. The oppression may be economical, political or cultural.
3. In an industrial situation, the minjung are those who are economically oppressed.

The Three Paradigms of Minjung Theologians

1. The first paradigm concerns the socio-biography of minjung. This paradigm methodologically draws from the ethnographical approach to minjung.
2. The second paradigm views minjung from the perspective of class. Minjung is conceptualized as a sort of people's democracy class.
3. The third paradigm emphasizes the importance of organizing networks of civil society, while acknowledging de-centeredness and diffusiveness of the civil and social movement.³⁴

The Three Theological Tasks

Suh Nam-Dong suggests three theological tasks of Korean Theology. They are:

1. Using the social-economic methodology.
2. Finding Minjung languages.
3. Doing theology in multiple fields outside churches.³⁵

³⁴ Kwon, *Minjung Theology Today*, 72.

³⁵ Kwon, *Minjung Theology Today*, 83.

The Bible

According to Ahn Byung-Mu:

The canonicity of sixty-six books of the Bible is established when you acknowledge church authority. But since I do not acknowledge this authority, I do not recognize the existence of the canon itself. Only sixty-six books became the canon not because they alone were the truth, but because church authority drew a line to that effect... Rev. Suh Nam-Dong and I do not acknowledge the concept of the canon.³⁶

Suh Nam-Dong views are, “the Bible is regarded as a source of theology along with the traditions and histories of the minjung.”³⁷ Nam-Dong uses elements from the Bible to support his ideas, and Jesus as a symbol or paradigm of minjung deliverance.³⁸ For Suh Nam-Dong, both the Christian tradition of the oppressed and the Korean tradition of the minjung are the major sources of theology.³⁹ By using Mark 2:27, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath,” Ya-Yang Chuang said, “Minjung Theology is, in fact, minjung hermeneutics of the Bible. The authority of the Bible was made for minjung and not minjung for the authority of the Bible. It does not mean that minjung is more important than the Bible. Rather, it means minjung’s experience should be the starting point for our biblical interpretation.”⁴⁰ Additionally, Ya-Yang Chuang summarizes the two Korean minjung theological ways of reading the Bible: “Suh prefers

³⁶ Byung-Mu, *Stories of Minjung Theology*, 55.

³⁷ Lee, *Religion and Social Formation in Korea*, 40.

³⁸ Lee, *Religion and Social Formation in Korea*, 143.

³⁹ Park, *Minjung Theology*, 8.

⁴⁰ Kwon, *Minjung Theology Today*, 181.

to read the Bible from the perspective of minjung; on the contrary, Ahn prefers to read Korean Minjung history from the perspective of the Bible.’’⁴¹

The Minjung Concept of God

In the views of the minjung theologians, the Bible speaks of God in the context of God being for men in history. The Bible mainly portrays God as Lord of history.⁴² The minjung theologian, Hyun Young-Hak said:

As Christians, we have to start with the promise that God, as the Lord of history, has worked in and through our history and that God, as revealed in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, has a special concern for the underdogs, namely, the minjung. Otherwise, the Christian God would have no place in our history, in the events of our time, or for that matter in the future.⁴³

Suh Nam-Dong’s response to the statement made by Young-Hak is that “the means of God’s self-revelation are primarily historical events of salvation, and the authentic means of communication of such events is ‘story.’”⁴⁴

The Christology

The Christology of Minjung Theology must be formed in the belief that Jesus acted to liberate the minjung from the Han of those victimized by oppression, exploitation, marginalization, humiliation, and colonization.⁴⁵ Minjung Christology focuses upon the kingdom which Jesus inaugurated and taught how to achieve. Minjung

⁴¹ Kwon, *Minjung Theology Today*, 183.

⁴² Lee, *The Comparative Study of the Christology in Latin American Liberation Theology*, 186.

⁴³ Kwon, *Minjung Theology Today*, 33.

⁴⁴ Kwon, *Minjung Theology Today*, 66.

⁴⁵ Lee, *The Comparative Study of the Christology in Latin American Liberation Theology*, 233-4.

Theology has developed its Christology from the point of departure in a confession of faith in Jesus Christ. That is, the Christological framework of Minjung Theology starts from the historical Jesus.⁴⁶

Minjung Theology concerning Jesus is not based on his divine nature but his human nature, which is speaking of Jesus as “a human being” who had his existence out of God. The historical Jesus was simply the man who lived in Palestine as depicted by the historian. As the Son of a carpenter, Jesus made his appearance in his hometown of Nazareth. This means that Minjung Theology sees the originality of Jesus and his life regarding society’s social and political calculation rather than the apocalyptic calculation of religion.⁴⁷ Minjung Christology is not the exclusive “representation” of the Christology of the Reformation’s Solus Christus. It is the inclusive solidarity Christology of the divine brother who suffers with us and who identified himself with the least among the people.”⁴⁸ Ahn Byung-Mu portrays that, “We need to discover and witness Christ in the place where no one is looking.” In the same way, Suh Nam-Dong thinks that the Messiah comes to us as an “incarnated-suffering neighbor. Minjung is the messiah, not because they have a heroic power, but because their suffering asks us to build a more just society.”⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Lee, *The Comparative Study of the Christology in Latin American Liberation Theology*, 241.

⁴⁷ Lee, *The Comparative Study of the Christology in Latin American Liberation Theology*, 245.

⁴⁸ Jurgen Moltmann, *Asian Contextual Theology for the Third Millennium* (Cambridge, UK: The Lutterworth Press, 2007), 76.

⁴⁹ Park Hyun-Ho, “Minjung in the Sinking of the Sewol Ferry: A Reading of Luke 10:25-42 from Minjung Theology’s Perspective,” *Korea Presbyterian Journal of Theology* 48, no. 3 (2016): 66, https://www.academia.edu/29690165/_Minjung_in_the_Sinking_of_the_Sewol_Ferry_A_Reading_of_Luke_10_25_42_from_Minjung_Theology_s_Perspective_Korea_Presbyterian_Journal_of_eology_Vol_48_No_3_2016_9_59_79.

The Church

For Minjung Theology looking forward, the Christian church must call on citizens to participate to establish justice and promote liberation for the oppressed to culminate salvation in the world here and now.⁵⁰ Regarding Korean churches, Hong Lei Lee said: “But the Korean church has taught that Jesus Christ changes a man’s heart, a man’s mind, or a man’s spirit, and that his mission is not to transform human society.”⁵¹ The church condemns revolutionary theological movements, but Nam-Dong believes they are the true bearers of the Holy Spirit and God’s power.⁵² For Kim Yong-Bock, the Korean church is a minjung church and can only be rightly understood from the perspective of the minjung. As a church with its roots in the minjung, Korean Christianity must be interpreted from the perspective of the minjung.⁵³

The Kingdom of God

The kingdom of God is not the place where the rich get richer and the poor poorer. The kingdom is not made up of destructive relationships of the sinful social structures of today. When Jesus inaugurated the eschatological kingdom, he meant for it to be a just and a place of equality for all the people, including socially marginalized, economically exploited, and politically powerless. Jesus’ intention for the kingdom was never to save individuals in terms of the apocalyptic tradition. The kingdom was not an adequate reflection of God’s holiness but a kingdom of justice and peace in the world. In

⁵⁰ Lee, *The Comparative Study of the Christology in Latin American Liberation Theology*, 145.

⁵¹ Lee, *The Comparative Study of the Christology in Latin American Liberation Theology*, 153.

⁵² Lee, *Religion and Social Formation in Korea*, 143.

⁵³ Lee, *Religion and Social Formation in Korea*, 147.

the kingdom of God, a man's life can be considered a life of love, selflessness, hope, generosity, and so on. We can see the minjung - the poor, oppressed and deprived in the kingdom of God. The rich and powerful are unable to be in that kingdom, since they oppose the poor and the powerless.⁵⁴

Therefore, minjung theologians interpret the kingdom of God as good news (liberation) to the poor and oppressed socially, politically, and economically in the world. According to Hong Lei Lee, "The kingdom must be a new society, which is totally transformed from a society corrupted by the rich and elite."⁵⁵

Salvation

The biblical text on salvation was reinterpreted from the Korean minjung context. In its affirmation of culture and history, Minjung Theology is similar to other Asian theologies. It is a theology of the cross and resurrection, because Minjung Theology interprets both pain and hope as not parochial but universal and ecumenical. They believe that salvation of the minjung begins with their socio-political freedom. They have a dream and a vision in which the minjung can control their history and destiny in the context of oppression.⁵⁶ Dr. Nam-Dong believes salvation is not from God, but from the minjung.⁵⁷ One of the minjung theologians, Kwon Jin-Kwan, states that "We need to focus more on justice than salvation and redemption because justice is more practical and

⁵⁴ Lee, *The Comparative Study of the Christology in Latin American Liberation Theology*, 230.

⁵⁵ Lee, *The Comparative Study of the Christology in Latin American Liberation Theology*, 231.

⁵⁶ Lee, *Religion and Social Formation in Korea*, 43.

⁵⁷ Lee, *Religion and Social Formation in Korea*, 143.

concrete than the latter.”⁵⁸ Therefore, I can say that salvation and redemption is not much of an importance in Minjung Theology. Instead, Minjung Theology focuses more on justice.

The Central Theme of Minjung Theology

There are two different opinions on the central theme in Minjung Theology. Shu Nam-Dong says that the central theme of Minjung Theology should not be Jesus but the minjung. Ahn Byung-Mu says that its central theme is both Jesus and the minjung because they are inseparable.⁵⁹ Nam-Dong asserts that the central theme of theology is the minjung and Jesus is a channel to help us understand the “Ochlos- people” and thus the minjung. Minjung Theology is man-centered but not God-centered.⁶⁰

Critique of Minjung Theology

Minjung theologians believe God’s revelation is not limited to the Bible. They emphasize the history of Korea as sacred as the history of the Biblical revelation. The experience of the Korean minjung is held as a major source for their theology. The minjung are a starting point for their biblical hermeneutics. Minjung theologians here try to reject any speculative starting point for theologizing Jesus’ death as atonement for one’s life through blood... Jesus’ death is not the primary stage for faith and theology in terms of the mystery of a religious redemptive service for man.⁶¹

⁵⁸ Kwon, *Minjung Theology Today: Contextual and Intercultural Perspectives*, 51.

⁵⁹ Park, *Minjung Theology: A Korean Contextual Theology*, 6.

⁶⁰ Lee, *Religion and Social Formation in Korea*, 40.

⁶¹ Lee, *The Comparative Study of the Christology in Latin American Liberation Theology*, 251.

Minjung historians begin with the social and political biography of the minjung because they believe the reality of the minjung can only be understood through the telling of their own stories. This is key to understanding their history and developing Minjung Theology, rather than beginning with a theological or philosophical view of history, into which the minjung are placed.⁶² According to John B. Cobb, “The interpretation of the Bible by minjung scholars, and especially of the gospel, was impressive as scholarship and gave critical grounds for their work.”⁶³

Conclusion

This theological foundation summary describes how the Minjung Movement, and its theology are foundational to this doctoral project entitled, “Biblical Youth Care and Counseling to Cross Culture Among the American Myanmar Community.” The context for this project is the American Myanmar Mission Church in Fort Worth, Texas. There are more than three hundred church members. Originally, they migrated to the United States as refugees because of the corrupt military dictatorship in Myanmar. Just recently, on February 1, 2021, Myanmar military dictators took over their government authority. The fifty-five million citizens of Myanmar would now have been under the dictatorship military control since 1962.

Undoubtedly, the Korean Minjung Movement and its theology are similar to the American Myanmar community because the Korean Minjung Movement is a response by the minjung oppressed people against the Korean military dictatorship. The government

⁶² Lee, *Religion and Social Formation in Korea*, 145.

⁶³ John B. Cobb, *Asian Contextual Theology for the Third Millennium: Theology of Minjung in Fourth-Eye Formation* (Cambridge, UK: Lutterworth Press, 2007), ix.

of the military dictators is accepted only by a few classes of people, such as the ruling class, high-class, or high officers. Since there was no social-political justice in the leadership of the military dictatorship, there were and will be protesting by the people. The Korean minjung are politically oppressed, economically exploited, socially alienated, culturally and intellectually kept uneducated agents who change society and history. Assuredly, liberation, social justice, and freedom are the hope of minjung oppressed people. Minjung Theology is a social-political theology seeking to reform unjust socio-political systems and structures.

The Myanmar education system was one of the highest in Asian after their independence until 1962 when General Ne Win took over the governmental authority and destroyed the educational systems of Myanmar. Consequently, Myanmar's minjung are uneducated due to the destruction of the education system. However, General. Ne Win and his military dictators sent their children to foreign countries to receive a better education. Many Myanmar citizens migrated around the world as refugees in response to the corrupt military dictatorship of Myanmar. Unfortunately, the influences from the military dictatorship on the mindset of the first generation exist in the American Myanmar community. They have not been willing to change their way of thinking for their family, society, and even the church.

On a personal note, the Korean Minjung Theology is not good at all. However, there is respect and love for them because of their concern for the oppressed and marginalized people. There is also respect for their founding fathers, such as Kim Chai-Choon. Ahn Byung-Mu, Suh Nam-Dong. Their leadership and contributions in response to the Korean military dictatorship will remain a part of Korean Christian history, and if

is relevant today for the Myanmar Christians in responses to military dictatorship. It is important to mention that the founding fathers' hermeneutic methods are the backbone of Minjung Theology. They interpret the Bible and the people's history. New insights are gained on the importance of Bible interpretation and of human history.

It is feasible to say that the minjung theologians focus on liberation for the suffering minjung people. They seek social-political justice and freedom. For this reason, this doctoral project is, "Biblical Youth Care and Counseling to Cross Culture Among the American Myanmar Community." After studying Minjung Theology, the oppression of the American Myanmar youths is inherited from their own parent's culture, which affects the family and the church. Therefore, biblical youth care and counseling will bring the kingdom of God into the community because true justice is found only in the kingdom of God. Only then will there be healing, justice, freedom, fairness, and understanding in the American Myanmar community.

CHAPTER FIVE

INTERDISCIPLINARY FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

As modern psychology reaches far beyond health and illness, mental and physical, the broad field of psychology can be defined as the scientific study of behavior, experience, and mental processes in all living creatures.¹ The field of study for this interdisciplinary foundation is the psychology of coaching, mentoring, and learning theory for this doctoral project, entitled, “Biblical Youth Care and Counseling to Cross Culture Among the American Myanmar Community.” Furthermore, the hypothesis is, if there is awareness and teaching from the perspective of cross-cultural issues in pastoral care and counseling to the immigrated community, then the cross-cultural issues could be solved. This chosen discipline on the theory of the psychology of coaching, mentoring, and learning is very interesting and exciting in expanding the area of the psychological study fields. Additionally, Dr. Ho Law is the person who put together coaching, mentoring, and learning in the study field of psychology by writing a book on, *The Psychology of Coaching, Mentoring, and Learning*. This book offers a dual perspective of coaching and mentoring as well as is strengthened by learning theory.

¹ Dodge Fernald, *Psychology: Six Perspectives* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publishing, 2008), 3.

Notably, the theory of the psychology of coaching, mentoring, and learning is a newly developed theory. After reading Dr. Ho Law's book, it confirmed the interdisciplinary field of study for this doctoral project. Because coaching, mentoring, and learning from the psychological perspective was an unfamiliar area of study, even terms like 'coach' or 'coaching' from a psychological perspective introduced new concepts unrelated to sports. Based on these new insights, psychological coaching and mentoring are necessary for the American Myanmar community because they are experiencing psychological implications in the United States.

It is a blessing to be a student in the Pastoral Care and Counseling focus group under the guidance of the mentors at the United Theological Seminary, which facilitated building the confidence to write on the relation between the theory of the psychology of coaching, mentoring, and learning and pastoral care and counseling.

The main content of this interdisciplinary foundation will be divided into two parts. The first part will introduce the psychology of coaching, mentoring, and learning. It will follow the definition of the terms coaching, mentoring, and learning. The next part will focus on the subtopics of defining what coaching psychology is, the development of psychology, answer the question why coaching, mentoring, and learning, and finally introduce the coaching core processes.

Additionally, the second part will present how the psychology of coaching, mentoring, and learning, being foundational for this interdisciplinary research, interacts with the project themes for the biblical, historical, and theological foundation chapters. This interactions study will describe how the psychology of coaching, mentoring, and learning shaped the research in these other areas. The research will introduce the new

insights gained and will provide clarity on the project as it relates to the biblical, theological, and historical foundation studies by incorporating this interdisciplinary research.

The Psychology of Coaching, Mentoring, and Learning

Definition of Terms

Coach/coaching: The term ‘coach’ has a dual meaning in English. A coach usually refers to an instructor or a trainer in sports. A coach can also literally mean ‘carriage’ or a vehicle to transport people from one place to another.² “Coaching is a language that leaders, managers, educators, health professionals, soldiers and indeed anyone that chooses in awareness to take responsibility for themselves and others must learn.”³ According to Passmore and Fillery-Travis, “Coaching is a Socratic-based future-focused dialogue between a facilitator (coach) and a participant (coachee/client), where the facilitator uses open questions, summaries, and reflections which are aimed at stimulating the self-awareness and personal responsibility of the participant.”⁴ Anthony Grant makes this more clear, “coaching is a goal-focused activity; clients come to coaching because there is a problem they need or want to solve or a goal they want to attain, and they are looking for help in constructing and enacting solutions to that

² Ho Law, *Psychology of Coaching, Mentoring, and Learning* (Chichester, UK: Wiley Blackwell, 2014), 53.

³ Hugh O’Donovan, *Coaching Psychology: A Practitioner’s Guide* (Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell, 2013), xi.

⁴ Jonathan Passmore and David B. Peterson, *The Wiley-Blackwell Handbook of the Psychology of Coaching and Mentoring* (Chichester, UK: Wiley Blackwell, 2013), 5.

problem.”⁵ Therefore, coaching is the process by which individuals gain the skills, abilities, and knowledge they need to develop themselves professionally and become more effective in their jobs.⁶

Mentor/mentoring: The word ‘mentor’ comes from a character in Greek mythology portrayed in *Homer’s Odysse: Mentor*. Mentor was actually Athena, the goddess of wisdom, in disguise, entrusted to educate Telemachus the son of Odysseus. In China, one would regard Confucius as the first mentor.⁷ The synonymous terms for mentor include teacher, advisor, and guide. Thus, mentor is “an experienced and trusted counselor.”⁸ Also, the term mentor, used in mentoring is a guardian who oversees the development of another, such as parenting. On the other hand, mentoring is “off-line help by one person to another in making significant transitions in knowledge, work or thinking.”⁹

Learning: Dr. Ho Law argued that coaching and mentoring should be anchored in the psychology of learning. He also suggested that learning can be defined as a cognitive process of acquiring skill and knowledge. According to Driscoll, learning is a persisting change in performance or performance potential that results from experience and

⁵ Passmore, *The Wiley-Blackwell Handbook*, 16.

⁶ Florence M. Stone, *Coaching, Counseling, and Mentoring: How to Choose and Use the Right Technique to Boost Employee Performance* (New York, NY: American Management Association, 2007), 11.

⁷ Law, *Psychology of Coaching, Mentoring and Learning*, 53.

⁸ Marta K. Lee, *Mentoring in the Library: Building for the Future* (Chicago, IL: American Library Association, 2011), 11.

⁹ Susan Wallace and Jonathan Gravells, *Mentoring* (London, UK: Learning Matters, 2008), 7.

interaction within the world.¹⁰ Nevertheless, people have different profiles of preferred learning methods.

What is Coaching Psychology?”

Passmore explains, “Coaching psychology is the scientific study of behavior, cognitive and emotion within the coaching practice to deepen our understanding and enhance our practice within coaching.”¹¹ In the book of *The Wiley-Blackwell Handbook of the Psychology of Coaching and Mentoring*, coaching psychology is concerned with the study, critical review, and sharing of evidence-based coaching practice, as opposed to a distinct or separate way of undertaking coaching with clients.¹² “Thus, coaching psychology is for enhancing the wellbeing and performance in personal life and work domains, being underpinned by models of coaching grounded in establishing psychological approaches.”¹³

Development of Coaching Psychology

Foundation of Coaching Psychology

Positive psychology and theories of learning are regarded as the two pillars that form the foundation of coaching psychology.¹⁴ In terms of research, coaching and

¹⁰ Law, *Psychology of Coaching, Mentoring and Learning*, 58.

¹¹ Passmore, *The Wiley-Blackwell Handbook*, 3.

¹² Passmore, *The Wiley-Blackwell Handbook*, 5.

¹³ Law, *Psychology of Coaching, Mentoring and Learning*, 60.

¹⁴ Law, *Coaching Psychology*, 21.

mentoring have really only come to the forefront since 2000.¹⁵ The coaching psychology movement has emerged from two corners in Australia from the work of Anthony Grant and the work of a small group of coaching psychology practitioner in the United Kingdom, led by Stephen Palmer.¹⁶ Coaching psychology is emerging as a new discipline. The British Psychological Society's (BPS) Special Group in Coaching Psychology (SGCP) was formed in 2004; and a register of coaching psychologists was set up in 2012 to indicate those psychologist practitioners who have special expertise in coaching psychology. In 2008, the Society for Coaching Psychology was founded, and in 2011, it was renamed to International Society for Coaching Psychology.¹⁷

In 1996, Martin Seligman became the president of the American Psychological Association (APA) and called for a positive psychology. He describes the scientific study of such topics as happiness, love, hope, optimism, life satisfaction, goal setting, leisure, and subjective wellbeing.¹⁸ According to Dr. Ho Law, positive psychology focuses on:

1. Positive emotions – the pleasant life.
2. Positive characters – the engaged life.
3. Positive institutions – the meaningful life.

Positive emotions consist of three domains along the temporal dimension:

1. The past, which is the positive experience from the past that gives us a sense of satisfaction, contentment, fulfilment, pride and serenity.

¹⁵ Passmore, *The Wiley-Blackwell Handbook*, xvi.

¹⁶ Passmore, *The Wiley-Blackwell Handbook*, 3.

¹⁷ Law, *Coaching Psychology*, xiii.

¹⁸ Alexis Bridley and Lee W. Daffin, *Abnormal Psychology* (Pullman, WA: Washington State University, 2020), 15.

2. The present, which means that we can positively engage in the present moment and thereby experience joy, ecstasy, calm, zest, ebullience, pleasure and possibly ‘flow.’
3. The future, which means that we can look towards the future positively with a sense of optimism, hope, faith, and trust.

Therefore, positive psychology is relevant to coaching in terms of its inquiry into human experiences such as happiness, wisdom, creativity, and strengths.¹⁹

Why Coaching, Mentoring, and Learning?

Corporate leaders have begun to realize that traditional training methods may not be able to cope with the pace of change. Hence, organizations have turned to coaching and mentoring to help develop their people, to deepen their talent pool, and to enhance their organizational learning capability. Mentoring and coaching go beyond industry. Anyone who wants to learn more about themselves or increase their knowledge in targeted areas and the wider environment can benefit.²⁰ According to Law’s observation, most people believe that coaching is beneficial for them and good for their business. Coaching enables people to create space to think and reflect upon their learning.

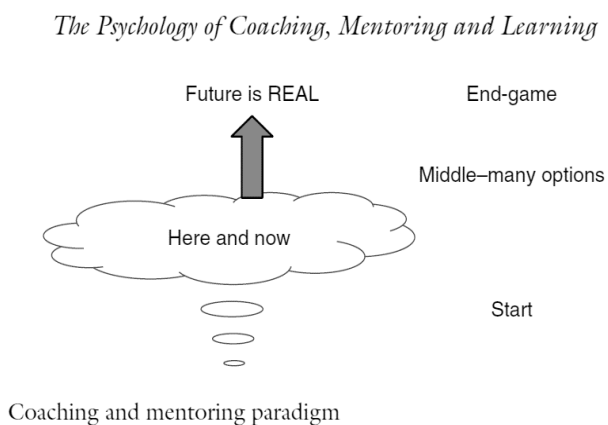
According to the European Mentoring and Coaching Council, both mentoring and coaching are its core organizational activities. Others believe mentoring takes place only in the world of business. Mentors are usually more experienced people who help their ‘proteges’ move up the corporate ladder. Therefore, coaching and mentoring are actually

¹⁹ Law, *Coaching Psychology*, 23.

²⁰ Law, *Psychology of Coaching, Mentoring, and Learning*, 7.

very similar. According to Daloz, 1999, mentors appear as trusted guides, who understand the theory of personal development and have had experience of translating it into practice. Mentors are not simply providing mentees with a road map and travel tips, but also walk with some on the journey together.

Coaching and mentoring can be understood from the perspective of positive psychology in terms of one's positive emotions within the present and future domains. Using the 'journey' metaphor for coaching, one focuses on the present – the here and now – as a primary concern and regarding the future, “the aspirations,” as if it were real. Nevertheless, the systems approach and the research on learning suggest that the effective development of coaching psychology as a discipline requires an interdisciplinary inquiry into the relevant theories and techniques.²¹



Dr. Ho Law suggested that “coaches and mentors must decide how to deal with the influence of culture and socio-historical aspects of our time within their diverse

²¹ Law, *Psychology of Coaching, Mentoring, and Learning*, 21.

communities.”²² He also gives five dimensions of positive development (Jorgensen and Nafstad, 2004).²³ They are:

- Motivation
- Actions
- Goals
- Context
- Socio-temporal elements

Dr. Ho Law gives the factors that undergirds the learning process and the relevancy for coaching, as they may have a significant impact upon the learner’s experience and upon the learning outcome:

- Action – doing (some social activities)
- Barrier
- Becoming
- Change
- Culture
- Champion – a leader, a facilitator, coach or mentor
- Community – social system
- Conversation
- Discourse – open and objective dialogue, challenging biased or distorted beliefs and assumptions.

²² Law, *Psychology of Coaching, Mentoring, and Learning*, 22.

²³ Law, *Psychology of Coaching, Mentoring, and Learning*, 22.

- Ethics – learning citizenship
- Governance – learning governance
- Meaning and purpose
- Practice
- Space – social learning spaces
- Self-identity – sense of belonging

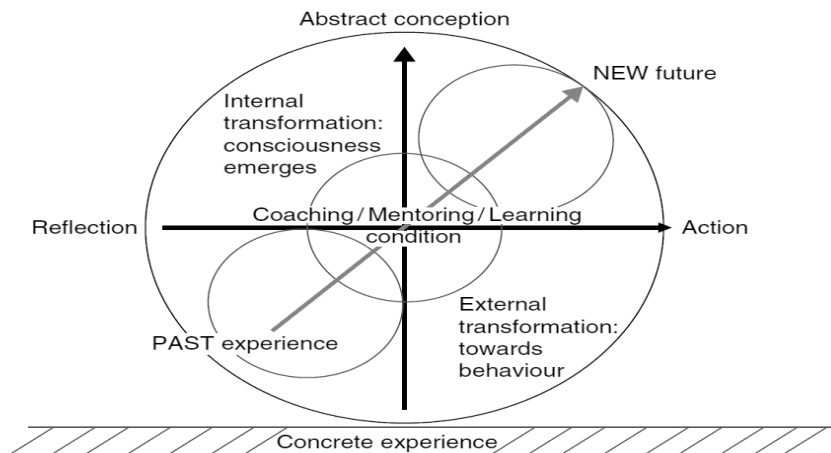
The Coaching Core Processes

1. Identify desired outcomes.
2. Establish specific goals.
3. Enhance motivation by identifying strengths and building self-efficacy.
4. Identify resources and formulate specific action plans.
5. Monitor and evaluate progress toward goals.
6. Modify action plans based on such feedback.

Florence M. Stone²⁴ gives the five principles of coaching:

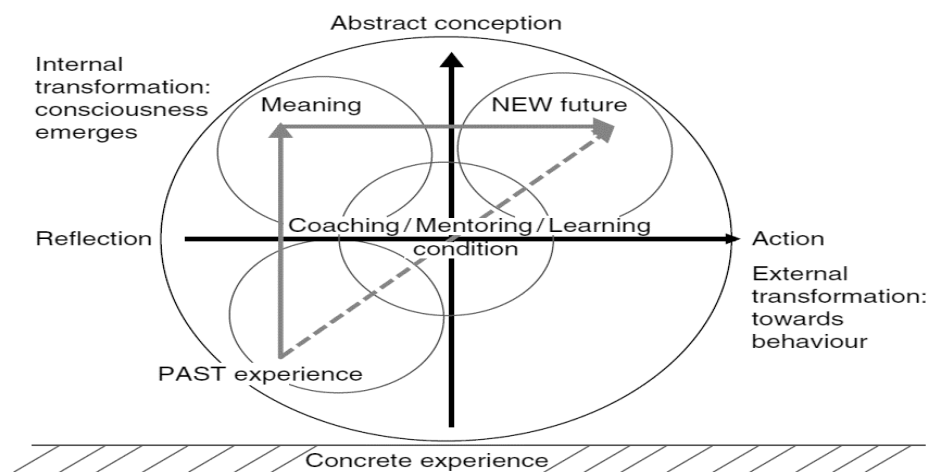
1. Ability to gather information.
2. Ability to listen to others.
3. Awareness of what is happening around.
4. Ability to instruct employees.
5. Ability to give feedback.

²⁴ Stone, *Coaching, Counseling, and Mentoring*, 17.



3.4 Models matching: Learning wheel and coaching/mentoring paradigm

The Psychology of Coaching, Mentoring and Learning



3.5 Dynamic coaching/mentoring/learning with meaning as an intervening

Interact with the Project Theme

The title of the doctoral project is “Biblical Youth Care and Counseling to Cross Culture Among the American Myanmar Community.” Additionally, the context is the American Myanmar Mission Church located in Fort Worth, Texas. The church was built under the leadership Rev. Samuel Lung. Presently, there are more than 300 church members. Initially, the church members migrated from different parts of Myanmar to Fort

Worth, Texas. Consequently, the church services are held in Myanmar's common language, which is Burmese. Because of the generational transition period, there are big gaps and misunderstandings within the American Myanmar Mission Church. They hurt each other knowingly or unknowingly in their daily lives.

This project theme and the hypothesis statement is that if there is awareness and teaching of the cross-cultural issues from the perspective of pastoral care and counseling to the immigrated community, then the cultural problems could be solved. For this reason, this research includes the psychology of coaching, mentoring, and learning theory in this interdisciplinary foundation chapter.

Dr. Ho Law is the one who introduced and put together coaching, mentoring, and learning in the psychology field of study. This field of study helped me to see the context, American Myanmar Mission Church, as without coaches, mentors as well as trainers. Although the church went through cross cultural issues, which resulted in broken relationships, misunderstandings, painful, and sorrowful communications in the community, still pastoral care and counseling is not offered to them. Therefore, the psychology of coaching, mentoring, and learning theory would be helpful as an interdisciplinary foundation to address cross-cultural issues, because the psychology of coaching, mentoring, and learning theory is positive psychology. It gives the awareness of positive qualities of in the context. Initially, it was thought that coaching was only related to sports. However, after reading Dr. Ho Law's psychology of coaching, mentoring, and learning book, it is probable to consider being one of the coaches in the community to lead them to success. Furthermore, it is necessary and an urgent need to offer pastoral care and counseling in the American Myanmar community. It is disturbing

to mention that there are also problems between the church pastors and the second-generation youth. Moreover, pastors are not able to meet, counseling the expectations of the youth. Pamela Mclean, who has thirty-five years of experience as a clinical and organizational psychologist and leader in the field of coaching said, “Today we view leadership and transition coaching as the two main domains in which coaching exists, all the while sufficiently and ethically managing the boundaries of consulting, counseling, and mentoring.”²⁵

Therefore, the psychology coaching, mentoring, and learning theory is the interdisciplinary foundation to this project, “Biblical Youth Care and Counseling to Cross Culture Among the American Myanmar community.”

Interaction with the Biblical Foundation

The Bible verses for the biblical foundation is Esther 4:1-17. The focus will be on two key verses, thirteen and fourteen, as follows:

Then Mordecai told them to return answer to Esther, Think not that in the king's palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews. For if you keep silence at such a time as this, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another quarter, but you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?

The book of Esther presents an alternative view of the Diaspora life of the people of Israel in the Persian Empire. Esther and Mordecai are the role models for succeeding in the Diaspora in the book of Esther. Therefore, the relationship of the Diaspora life between Mordecai and Esther will be the focus for the biblical foundation chapter.

Mordecai can be portrayed as a first-generation who served the king of Persia and Esther

²⁵ Pamela Mclean, *The Completely Revised Handbook of Coaching: A Developmental Approach* (San Francisco, CA: John Wiley and Sons, 2012), 6.

can be portrayed as a second-generation. This biblical story is helpful for the American Myanmar refugee society in the United States because there is an insight into the relationship between the first- and second-generation Diaspora communities in the land of the Persian Empire.

Therefore, there are interactions between the biblical foundation and the interdisciplinary foundation. Moreover, the interdisciplinary field of study on the psychology of coaching, mentoring, and learning theory is very much connected to the biblical foundation text, Esther 4:13-14. After studying Dr. Ho Law's psychology of coaching, mentoring, and learning theory, the focus will be on the success of Esther as a result of Mordecai's coaching, mentoring, and teaching. It is possible to say that Esther could have been experiencing psychological issues in her life being without her parents. Thus, when Mordecai, the coach, mentor, and teacher, and Esther's work in the Persian empire, together they achieved success in life. There is no doubt that there is a big gap between the first and second generations of the American Myanmar community. Nevertheless, if the first-generation could become a coach and mentor like Mordecai to the next generation, then there will be success in the future of the second generation of the American Myanmar community in the United States. Therefore, after writing the interactions with the biblical foundation, it is a desire to share the principles to the community in this interdisciplinary foundation chapter. The first and second generations should not be separated themselves, instead they should be united and fight together for life to achieve success in life as Mordecai and Esther in the Diaspora land. There is a personal desire to become a coach, mentor, and trainer to the next generation.

Interaction with the Historical Foundation

This section will introduce how the interdisciplinary foundation interacts with the historical foundation. It is a privilege to write about Adoniram Judson as the historical figure and his missionary movement in Myanmar. Judson was the first American missionary in Myanmar who became a remarkable person in the history of Myanmar Christianity. Psychologically and mentally, Judson himself was affected by the death of his college friend, whom he learned the reality of death and turned to God. Judson may have planned to conduct evangelistic and church planting ministries but soon realized the challenges of the language and cultural differences. The most significant contributions of Judson are:

- The Dictionary of the Burma language with English explanations.
- The Burmese Version of the Holy Bible.
- The Burmese-English Dictionary.

Hence, Judson became a Myanmar to win the people of Myanmar. Judson's missionary approach to the people of Myanmar was literature and education. Even his wife, Mrs. Judson, was teaching and training women and children. Judson trained his covert person to become a preacher as well as a leader. By observing all the work of Judson, it is accurate to say that he was a coach, mentor, learner, and trainer for Christ to win the people of Myanmar. Also, the psychology of coaching, mentoring, and learning theory provides new insights to revisit the historical figure Adoniram Judson and his missionary movement in Myanmar. It is interesting to note that one of the qualifications of Judson is that he mastered the language of Burmese and Pali. Specifically, the

Burmese-English Dictionary has become one the best dictionaries for the Myanmar people today.

Psychologically, Judson was experiencing cross-cultural problems in Myanmar. He learned the Burmese culture way of living by going to the Buddhist temple. He was put in prison when his wife died with children. However, Judson never gave up his life for Christ to the people of Myanmar until his last breath in the ocean. Therefore, he was a light and a hope-giving missionary to the dark side of Myanmar by writing, translating, preaching, teaching, training, and leading the newly converted.

Therefore, after reading Dr. Ho Law's psychology of coaching, mentoring, and learning theory, the sacrificial life of the historical figure Adoniram Judson became evident. Personally, it strengthened the desire to serve God with all the qualifications and talents that God gives in life. Consequently, it has become, as much as possible, a personal desire to practice coaching, mentoring, learning, and training for Christ to the American Myanmar community. However, it lacks the psychology of the coaching, mentoring, and learning theory for the Christian Myanmar world, because the Myanmar ministers are currently enduring a military dictatorship coup.

Therefore, to be a successful minister enduring the social-political problems, all Myanmar ministers and leaders must consider the leadership model exhibited by Adoniram Judson. Definitively, if the psychology of the coaching, mentoring, and learning theory is available to the Myanmar Christian church, the ministers and leaders may be able to help many of the youth who are enduring social-political problems. After reflecting on the interactions between the historical figure and this interdisciplinary foundation, the psychology of the coaching, mentoring, and learning theory is necessary

for Myanmar ministers themselves. Many pastors may not think of being or seeing themselves as coaches or becoming mentors for each other or their church members. Traditionally, in Myanmar churches, the senior pastor never likes to be a coach or mentor for a non-experienced junior pastor because they felt insecure about this position in the church. However, a coach or mentor will focus on the success of the students.

Interaction with the Theological Foundation

The theological foundation chapter will introduce the Minjung Theology. The Minjung (masses of people) Theology is a form of situational theology in South Korea developed to address the socio-political issues in the country. Many scholars associate the Minjung Theology with the Korean version of Liberation Theology, and some scholars portray the Minjung Theology as a political theology. Additionally, Asian Christian theologians keep the Minjung Theology under Asian Contextual Theology. In 1970, under the military dictatorship and the oppression of workers, there was a cultural renaissance, which strengthened the workers' and students' movements.²⁶ Ahn Byung Mu, Suh Nam Dong, and Kim Yong Bok analyzed the socio-political-economic situation, interpreted the Bible as a minjung book. Furthermore, it is essential to mention that Ahn Byung Mu, Suh Nam Dong, and Kim Yong Bok are coaching and mentoring Christian students to respond to the military government dictatorship in Korea. Psychologically, the minjung, oppressed people, students, workers, and teachers are looking for healing and a

²⁶Jung Mo Sung, "Minjung Theology and the Social Aphasia: A Dialogue with the Liberation Theology," *Madang* 31 (June 2019): 3-34.

future. Even today, it is really painful and sorrowful to learn of the Myanmar military government dictatorship.

Therefore, there are interactions between the theological foundation, which engages “Minjung Theology” and the interdisciplinary foundation which introduces the “psychology of coaching, mentoring, and learning theory.” Minjung Theology seeks social-political justice for the oppressed people, and the psychology of coaching, mentoring, and learning theory helps oppressed people reach their potential. The term ‘coach/coaching’ and ‘mentor/mentoring’ are not new terms to the people today. Coaching has traveled a long way, and it now goes beyond healing a wounded self, offering diverse, positive, and action-orientated interventions. People come to life-coaching to overcome something they perceive is wrong in their lives and they believe things can be better.²⁷

Comparatively, mentoring can be defined as a sustained relationship between a novice and an expert. For experts, it provides help, support, and guidance that helps the novice develop the necessary skill to enter or continue their career path.²⁸ The minjung theologians are observing the relationship between the people and ruling government. In order to help and give a future to the suffering people, they responded to the corrupt actions of the military dictatorship in South Korea.

Therefore, there must be a good relationship between the coach, mentor, and the students. “Both teacher, mentors, and their mentees need to be aware of the relationship

²⁷Simon Western, *Coaching and Mentoring: A Critical Text* (London, UK: SAGE Publishing, 2012), 12.

²⁸India J. Podsen and Vicki M. Denmark, *Coaching and Mentoring First-Year and Student Teachers* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2013), 10.

that should develop within practicum and first-year experiences, as well as the anxiety these interactions can produce.”²⁹ Additionally, there are three goals that a teacher mentoring focuses in: (a) helping novices speed up the learning of a new job or skill and reduce the stress of transition; (b) improving instructional performance of novices through modeling by a top performer; (c) socializing novices into the profession of teaching.³⁰ The coach or mentor needs to understand and help the client understand the context in which the goal is set, which may help or hinder its achievement.³¹ A better understanding of theology was gained after putting together the theological foundation and interdisciplinary foundation. Therefore, theology must relate to every human’s past, present, and future well-being.

Conclusion

The study of the psychology of coaching, mentoring, and learning theory as the interdisciplinary foundations examines how other fields of study intersect and inform this project, entitled, “Biblical Youth Care and Counseling to Cross Culture Among the American Myanmar Community.” Therefore, this research described how the psychology of coaching, mentoring, and learning theory are foundational to this doctoral project.

Psychology is one of the interesting interdisciplinary fields of study for this doctoral project. This research focuses on the psychology of coaching, mentoring, and learning from the broader psychological study fields. Dr. Ho Law is the person who put

²⁹ Podsen, *Coaching and Mentoring First-Year and Student Teachers*, 13.

³⁰ Podsen, *Coaching and Mentoring First-Year and Student Teachers*, 37.

³¹ David Clutterbuck and Susan A. David, *Beyond Goals: Effective Strategies for Coaching and Mentoring* (New York, NY: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2016), 31.

together coaching, mentoring, and learning within the study field of psychology. The coaching psychology movement has emerged from two corners in Australia from the work of Anthony Grant and in the United Kingdom, led by Stephen Palmer. Positive psychology and theories of learning are considered as the two pillars that form the foundation of coaching psychology. Therefore, positive psychology plays an essential role in the psychology of coaching, mentoring, and learning.

“Coaching psychology is the scientific study of behavior, cognitive and emotion within coaching practice to deepen our understanding and enhance our practice within coaching.”³² The coach and mentor must be aware of physical, social, emotional, cognitive, language developments, and student relationships. The purpose of coaching and mentoring is to help and develop their students, to deepen their talent pool, and to enhance their organizational learning capability.

Based on the project title, *Biblical Youth Care and Counseling to Cross Culture Among the American Myanmar Community*,” if there is awareness and teaching from the perspective of cross-cultural issues in pastoral care and counseling to the immigrated community, then the cultural problems could be solved. It is no doubt that coaching, mentoring, and counseling are necessary for the American Myanmar community today, because they are experiencing cross-cultural challenges in their personal lives, family, and church. Additional, youth are stuck in the middle between native culture handed down from parents and western culture, United States of America. As a result, many students stop their education after high school. Only a few students continue further in college. Most of the American Myanmar church pastors cannot study theology in the

³² Passmore, *The Wiley-Blackwell Handbook*, 3.

United States due to poor educational backgrounds. They fail to be a coach, mentor, and counselor to educated youth in the United States. Furthermore, this interdisciplinary research will help identify how a minister can be a coach, mentor, and counselor to a cross-cultural community. Many talented youths give up easily when hard times come in their life because coaching, mentoring, and learning are not offered to them.

Therefore, the psychology of coaching, mentoring, and learning played an essential role in pastoral care and counseling because psychology coaching, mentoring, and learning involve studies of motivation and cognition. It is an effective process for change, growth, improved performance and well-being in life and work. Therefore, the summary indicates how the interdisciplinary field and theory relate to and support this doctoral project.

CHAPTER SIX

PROJECT ANALYSIS

Introduction

Chapter one presents my ministry focus. My spiritual autobiography is written from my family background and concludes with me as a becoming a student at United Theological Seminary. My first chapter also presented about my ministry context. The result of my first chapter research, my Doctor of Ministry project is “Biblical Youth Care and Counseling to Cross Culture Among the American Myanmar Community.” This project is born through my ministry experiences in the kingdom of God as well as by the need of my context the American Myanmar Mission Church in Fort Worth, Texas. One of the common crises among the American Myanmar Community in the United States involve cross-cultural issues by visiting American Myanmar Mission Church. The project hypothesis is that “if the members of the American Myanmar Mission Church are exposed to pastoral Care and Counseling practices, then they will be equipped to identify what are the cross-cultural problems that they each face.” Therefore, the problem of my Doctor of Ministry Project is the issue of cross-cultural misunderstanding; it causes conflicts between the first and second generation among the American Myanmar community. Observation and investigation of the American Myanmar community revealed that no biblical youth care and counseling exists even though there are broken relationships within the community. Cross-Cultural diversity is becoming more

pronounced in today's world. Cross-cultural adaptation takes place when a person or a family moves to a new environment or unfamiliar setting.¹

Therefore, this introduction will discuss how each of the foundation chapters will impact this doctoral project entitled, "Biblical Youth Care and Counseling to Cross Culture Among the American Myanmar community." Furthermore, this introduction will present the conclusion from each of the foundation chapters to summarize how the components of this research support the integral parts of the project.

Chapter two engages Esther 4:1-17 as the supporting text for the biblical foundation of the project. It is relevant to the context, which is the American Myanmar community. The text, an exegetical analysis, presents Mordecai and Esther as the model for a cross-culture community. Mordecai gives care and counseling to Esther for her to gain a royal position with the king. Considering this depiction of the text, Mordecai represents the life of the first-generation in a foreign land, and Esther represents the life of the second-generation in a cross-cultural community. Likewise, Mordecai and Esther stand together in the cross-cultural kingdom where difficulties, problems, crises, misunderstanding, jealousy, and challenges exist in their daily lives. Although there are gaps and misunderstandings between Mordecai as representative of the first generation and Esther as representative of the second generation, they came together to save their people of Israel. They both became successful leaders for the people of God in the foreign land Persian Empire. There is no doubt that the American Myanmar community needs pastoral care and counseling because they settled into the United States as refugees.

¹ N.-Hashem Abi, "Cross-Cultural Psychology," ed. David G. Benner and Peter C. Hill, *Baker Encyclopedia of Psychology and Counseling* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999), 295.

Therefore, the American Myanmar community must look at the story of Esther and Mordecai as a model to address their cross-culture experiences.

Chapter three mentioned about Adoniram Judson and his missionary movement in Myanmar as the historical foundation. It is a privilege and honor to use Adoniram Judson as the historical figure for this project because he was known as an American Congregationalist and later the first Protestant Baptist missionary from North America to preach in foreign lands. He was sent to be a missionary in Myanmar at the age of twenty-five years old and served God as a missionary for more than sixty years in the land of Myanmar. Judson died at the age of sixty-one on April 12, 1850, buried at sea in the Bay of Bengal. Judson learned the culture of Myanmar at twenty-five years old and later became a writer and Bible translator for the people of Myanmar. His Burmese-Bible translated version remains one of the best Bible translations today. Of equal importance, the American Myanmar youth should not give up on their future because of all the cross-cultural problems. It is a desire to see the educated youth in the United States serve God and the nation as Judson served God and the Myanmar people for his entire life. It is also a desire to see a new Adoniram Judson from amongst the American Myanmar community proclaim the gospel among the united citizens.

Still, his contributions are active in Myanmar Christianity and available to all the people of Myanmar. He was a person who connected the American and Myanmar Christian history. The purpose of studying the life of Adoniram Judson is to provide the model lifestyle of Judson in Myanmar to the American Myanmar Community. Therefore, this chapter is presenting the model lifestyle of Adoniram Judson in a cross-cultural context in Myanmar to the American Myanmar community.

Chapter four describes how the Minjung Movement, and its theology are foundational to this doctoral project. The Korean Minjung Movement is a response by the minjung oppressed people against the Korean military dictatorship. The hope of minjung oppressed people are liberation, social justice, and freedom are the hope of minjung oppressed people. Therefore, Minjung Theology is a social-political theology seeking to reform unjust socio-political systems and structures. Minjung theology is relevant to American Myanmar community and homeland people. On February 1, 2021, Myanmar's military dictators invaded their government authority. The fifty-five million citizens of Myanmar would now have been under the dictatorship of military control since 1962. The government of the military dictators is accepted only by a few classes of people, such as ruling class, high class, or high officers. Since there was no social-political justice in the leadership of the military dictatorship, there were and will be protests by the people. Therefore, the Minjung Theology and its movement are deeply related to my context. The effects of military dictatorship are still being experienced mentally, emotionally, and spiritually in the life of the American Myanmar Community.

Chapter five examines the study of the psychology of coaching, mentoring, and learning theory as the interdisciplinary foundation for this doctoral project as it examines how other fields of study intersect and inform this project. Therefore, the psychology of coaching, mentoring, and learning plays an essential role in pastoral care and counseling because psychology coaching, mentoring, and learning involve studies of motivation and cognition. It is an effective process for change, growth, improved performance and well-being in life and work. Therefore, chapter five describes how the psychology of coaching, mentoring, and learning theory are foundational to this doctoral project.

Chapter six provides a critical analysis of the Doctor of Ministry research project on “Biblical Youth Care and Counseling to Cross Culture Among the American Myanmar Community.” The project purpose is that if the members of the American Myanmar Mission Church are exposed to pastoral care and counseling practices, then they will be equipped to identify the cross-cultural problems that they each face. Chapter six presents the methodology, implementation, demographics, pre- and post-survey questions, feedback, journey writing, workshops, conclusion, and a summary of learning on the project.

Methodology

This project methodology is focused on qualitative analysis using interviews, storytelling, and observations to prove my hypothesis. To test the hypothesis and evaluate the results, surveys, interviews, and examination methods will be used in my projects. The participants will be able to recognize how these cross-cultural issues and cultural problems have affected them negatively. The participants will be given pre- and post-tests and interviews before and after the project. The participants will acquire basic proficiency in applying pastoral care and counseling to the cultural problems they have encountered and are experiencing.

The Proposed Project Calendar

This project Calendar timeline was between January and February 2022. The presentations were held on zoom meeting because going COVID-19 Pandemic condition

in my context. Below is a layout of the dates and topics of discussion that was held during the research project.

Friday, January 7th – The Value of Awareness (Part I)

Friday January 14th - The Value of Awareness (Part II)

Friday January 21 -Study on Cross-Culture Overviews

Friday January 28 - Parenting to Cross-Cultural Community

Friday February 4- The Need of Biblical Youth Care and Counseling

Friday February 11- The Need of Pastoral Care and Counseling

The pre- and post-survey questions are outlined below:

1. How do you define culture?
2. How do you define “subculture?”
3. Give samples of both “culture” and “subculture?”
4. How do you define “cross-culture interaction?”
5. Have you experienced problems and issues that arose out of “cross-cultural interaction?” if you have, please elaborate on such experiences.
6. What do you believe should be the Church’s position on the integration and interaction of different cultures?
7. How can the church facilitate bridging the gaps that arise when two or more cultures interact with each other?
8. What is the Bible’s /God’s position on the integration and interaction of different cultures?

Implementation

Pre-Survey Questions Results

There are eight pre-survey questions for the project on Biblical Youth Care and Counseling to Cross Culture Among the American Myanmar Community. All the participants say Yes to Q5 and explain their experiences of cross-culture in the context. The most deferent ideas come from questions Q6. Seventy percent of the participants believe that the church should not involve culture matter because the church must focus on the gospel of Jesus Christ. Therefore, all the participant accepted that they never think about Q7 that asked, “How can the church facilitate bridging the gaps that arise when two or more cultures interact with each other?” For example, the answer from Participant One: “As I’ve previously mentioned in the question above, God has written through Apostle Paul, the Church has an obligation to protect the truth. The Church needs to be able to differentiate what is from the world and of the truth, to flee and reject any ideas that come from man which basically sums up the position on the integration and interaction of different cultures.”

Post-Survey Questions Results

Generally, Q1 to Q5 answers are not much different from the pre-survey. The concept of culture in the church has changed. They could see the cross-culture experiences in the church. For example, the elder group wanted to sing the Burmese song, while the second generation wanted to sing the English song. Ninety percent of participants accepted that the church needed to facilitate bridging the gaps that arise when two cultures interact. The participants came to understand more about the cross-culture

crisis in the context by participating in the project. This must be based on the biblical position toward cultures because God's Word is more valuable than each own culture and beliefs.

Session I: THE VALUE OF CARE (Part I)

Below you will find the order of presentation:

- Opening Prayer (2 Minutes)
- First Presentation (15 Minutes)
- Discussion and questions (10 Minute)
- Second Presentation (20 Minutes)
- Discussion and questions (10 Minutes)
- Closing Prayer (3 Minutes)

Session one was held on Friday, January 7, 2022, by zoom. Participant One prayed for the opening then I presented my PowerPoint presentation of my biblical foundation text Esther 4: 1-17. There were ten participants in the Zoom. First fifteen minutes, I presented the background of the Book of Esther follow by subtitle to include authorship and date, purpose of the book, historical setting, literary context, and a Mordecai. After this, there was discussion and questions for another ten minutes. Eighty percent of the participants say that this is the first time for them to study the background of the book. Although they knew the story of Esther from childhood. I presented exegesis study on the text Esther 4: 1-17 for twenty minutes. Then, there was another ten more minutes for feedback and questions on the presentation. All the participants were excited to give their feedback on the presentation. They were able to see the similarity between

theirs and the story of Esther at such a time. The status of Mordecai and Esther were slavery under Persian Empire which capture the attention of the participants. Since they also came into the United States as refugees from Myanmar. The results of Session One help them to understand the story of Mordecai and Esther from a cross-cultural perspective. The project presentation ended with prayer and invitation for the next Zoom Meeting. Therefore, Nathaniel Branden said, “the first step toward change is awareness. The second step is acceptance.”² John C. Maxwell continued to explain, “if you to change and grow, then you must know yourself and accept who you are before you can start building.”³

Sessions II: The Value of Awareness (Part II)

- Order of Presentation
- Welcoming and Opening Prayer
- First Presentation (10 Minutes)
- Discussion and Questions (5 Minutes)
- Second Presentation (10 Minutes)
- Coffee Time: (3 Minutes)
- Third Presentation (15 Minutes)
- Discussion and Questions (15 Minutes)
- Song: “Carry Your Candle Run to the Darkness”
- Closing by together Prayer

² John C. Maxwell, *The Fifteen Invaluable Laws of Growth* (New York, NY: Center Street, 2022), 20.

³ Maxwell, *The Fifteen Invaluable Laws of Growth*, 20.

This project zoom meeting was held from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. on Friday, January 14, 2022. Three more participants were added in the zoom meeting because participants from the first meeting invited them. Therefore, the total number of participants were thirteen in the second session project presentation. I extended a welcome to the participant. Participant two prayed for us. In my first presentation, I gave highlights on the background of Adoniram Judson's family and education. The second presentation was on Judson's transformation and the first missionary journey in India. The third presentation was on the Adoniram Judson missionary movement in Myanmar. The story of Judson was pleasing to all the participants. They understand that how Judson is the pioneer, founder, and beginner of Myanmar Church history in the eighteenth century. He is considered the first significant missionary in the Land of Myanmar. The purpose of studying the life of Adoniram Judson is to provide the model lifestyle of Judson in Myanmar to the American Myanmar Community. There were positive responses from all the participants. I challenged them to carry the light of the gospel in the land of United States just as Adoniram Judson carried the gospel into Myanmar. They realized how much Judson cared for the lost soul of the people in Myanmar.

Session III: Study on Cross- Culture Overviews

The project Zoom Meeting was held on Friday January 21, 2022. The order of project presentations are as below:

- Welcoming and Greeting - Me
- Opening Prayer: Participant Three
- First presentation

- Discussion and Questions
- Second Presentation
- Discussion and Questions
- Closing Prayer

There are seven dimensions of cross-cultural communication by David in the book called “What in the World Is God Doing?: The Essentials of Global Missions.”

1. world views (ways of perceiving the world),
2. cognitive processes (ways of thinking),
3. linguistic forms (ways of expressing ideas),
4. behavioral patterns (ways of acting),
5. social structure (ways of interacting),
6. media influence (ways of channeling the message),
7. and motivational resources (ways of deciding)⁴

The effective cross-cultural communication is necessary within American Myanmar Communalilty. Naturally, learning the “body language” of a new culture is very important to the cross-cultural missionary.⁵ Body language also greatly different from one culture to another. In some Indonesian cultures, placing the hands on the hips with elbows bent is considered offensive, as is showing the bottom of the feet in Thai cultures.

⁴ C. Gordon Olson and Don Fanning, *What in the World Is God Doing?: The Essentials of Global Missions*, Seventh Edition, Expanded, Revised, and Updated (Lynchburg, VA: Global Gospel Publishers, 2013), 206.

⁵ John Mark Terry, Ebbie C. Smith, and Justice Anderson, *Missiology: An Introduction to the Foundations, History, and Strategies of World Missions* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1998), 287.

Also, never receive any object with the left hand as many Asians, among others will be offended by that.⁶

According to cultural anthropology scholars A. L. Kroeber and C. Kluckhohn; “Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups, including their embodiment in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional.”⁷ People can gain cross cultural experience and advance their level of cross-cultural competence by developing four areas of learning and practices: “cross cultural awareness, skills, values, and practices.”⁸ All cultures recognize the family as a basic social institution, but each culture has a peculiar understanding of family. A father and mother are basic to every family because they are involved in procreation, in bringing children into the world.⁹ I presented the influences of cross-culture in my second PowerPoint presentation. They are individual life, marriage life, education life, working life or place, and church and community.

Seventy percent of participants are not aware or care about the life that they experiment cross-culture. Cultural awareness is defined as the ability to be conscious, observant, appreciative, and even accepting of similarities, and differences among and between other cultures. When people have cultural awareness, they can acknowledge,

⁶ Art M. Van Beek, *Cross-Cultural Counseling* (Augsbury, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1996), 30.

⁷ D. A. Carson, *Christ and Culture Revisited* (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008), 2.

⁸ Simon L. Dolan and Khristine Marin Kawamura, “Cross Cultural Competence: A Field Guide for Developing Global Leaders and Managers” (Wagon Lane, UK: Howard House, 2015), 3.

⁹ John J. Pilch, *A Cultural Handbook to the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2012), 105.

respect, and build upon ethnic, sociocultural, and linguistics diversity as they think, feel, and act in their work and lives.¹⁰

Session IV: Parenting to Cross-Cultural Community

The project Zoom Meeting was held on Friday January 28, 2022. The presentation order is mentioned below.

- Welcoming and Greeting
- Opening Prayer – Participant Four
- Frist Presentation
- Discussion and Questions
- Second Presentation
- Discussion and Questions
- Closing Prayer: Participant Five

The parenting matter is very much important to every family in the world. There were ten participants in this ZOOM Meeting. They are between the ages of eighteen to twenty-five. Firstly, I opened with biblical principles for parenting. I summarized the presentation to show how God parents us to our own children. All the participants accepted that their parents need the education of parenting in their own family. God is the author of every family. Therefore, God wants every parent to be a successful leader in their own families. The participants are experiencing cross-cultural crisis in their family.

¹⁰ Dolan and Kawamura, “Cross Cultural Competence,” 74.

The presentation helps me to learn about their voices. Therefore, it is an important goal of a parent to be a good listener.¹¹

I was invited by one of Myanmar Church called “Revival Baptist Church of Indianapolis” to teach on the topic: “Bible Family” on Feb 26, 2022. The teaching started from morning 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. There were around twenty-one women in the training. Ninety percent of mothers are accepting that they need biblical parental teaching in their family. I was able to get their concern for children. Therefore, to raise godly children every parent must become a godly parent in the family. It is important to teach our children about God. It is an opportunity to introduce them about Christ. It is a privilege to encourage them to live lives that please and honor God. I presented biblical principles of parenting in my first presentation.

Session V: The Need of Biblical Youth Care and Counseling

- Welcoming and Greeting
- Opening Prayer – Participant Six
- Presentation
- Discussion and Questions
- Closing – Participant Seven

This session occurred on Friday February 4, 2022. The participants were the same number as last time. The purpose was to help them to find the way in biblical teaching. Biblical counseling and worldly counseling are different in their perspective. I brought

¹¹ Tim Clinton, Chap Clark, and Joshua Straub, *The Quick-Reference Guide to Counseling Teenagers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2010), 116.

two Bible verse: “How can a young person stay on the path of purity? By living according to Your Word” (Ps. 119:9). “All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness” (2 Tim.3:16). Youth are getting challenged in their home, school, church, and community. The participants were willing to share both negative and positive experiences.

After listening to their questions and sharing, they need a spiritual coach, mentor in their life journey. They could not share some of their experiences with their parents or they had no one to listen to them. Therefore, they need God’s Word to overcome their life challenges. In the moment, my interdisciplinary foundation chapter is related because it is on the psychology of coaching, mentoring, and learning. It is an effective process for change, growth, improved performance, and well-being in life and work. The goal of biblical counseling is to promote spiritual maturity in the journey of faith.

Session VI: The Need of Pastoral Care and Counseling

The last session project was a Zoom Meeting. It was held on Friday February 11, 2002. The topic was on the Need of Pastoral Care and Counseling and a presentation was made to the participants. The reason why we need pastoral care and counseling is that families are broken. Churches are divided according to the leaders. Specially, pastors are not able to offer counseling to the youth because youth are not open to discussing their experiences. One of the reasons is that there is a gap between them. According to the participants, it is hard to share their story to with the pastor. They felt insecure to open either to their parents or church pastors. Biblical pastoral counseling uses the truths of scripture, explaining, and applying them to the individual’s life-exhorting, rebuking,

correcting, and training so that practical help is gained through the understanding and application of God's Word (2 Tim. 3:16).¹² Therefore, Pastoral Care does not exist by a social or historical vacuum, but it is God's caring for humanity and creation. Pastoral care is not limited to theology and ecclesiology for its content. Pastoral care seeks the most effective means to carry out its tasks both for the sake of the recipients of the care and for the church.¹³ Many American Myanmar families today are in serious trouble due to unawareness of cross-cultural. Therefore, family counseling is a great importance in the community. Therefore, pastors are to care for church members and all the believers are to care for pastors. Pastoral care is the living bread that feeds the soul.¹⁴

Summary of Learning

I have been so blessed to be one of the doctoral students at United Theological Seminary in my theological education journey. I learned the importance of my spiritual autobiography once again in my doctoral education journey. This project helps me to recall back God's calling and commitment that I made to become a minister in His Kingdom. I was born into the world where there is no electricity or candle to give light in the house. However, I became a servant of God to lead the lost souls into the kingdom of God.

¹²Got Questions Ministries, *Got Questions? Bible Questions Answered* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2002–2013).

¹³ William V. Arnold, "Pastoral Care," *Encyclopedia of the Reformed Faith* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, Saint Andrew Press, 1992), 271.

¹⁴ Thomas C. Oden, *Ministry through Word and Sacrament*, Classic Pastoral Care (New York, NY: Crossroad, 1989), 59.

This project helps me to witness life experiences in a deeper manner in an immigration community in the United States. The results are based on my context American Myanmar Mission Church located in Fort Worth, Texas. One of positive things is that they love God because they came together in one place to worship God. This is not just merely a situation to run a church by refugee community. In the beginning of the church, the leadership of pastor was effective for the members. A pastor responsible are not only preaching the Word of God on the Sunday but needed to be case worker throughout all the weekdays because most the church members are not able to speak. They did not know how to handle the United States ways of living. Therefore, Church became one the best gathering place where they could share daily experiences and learn from one another. As a result, the church membership is repeatedly growing.

The church members were not interested in attending the worship service when they could solve their daily situations. My context was divided into many groups because the church is affected by tribalism spirit. Therefore, the leadership of the pastor is challenging to bring them back in unity. Also, the separation of families is increasing year after year due to marriage problems.

This project helps me to deeper understand Adoniram Judson's ministry movement in Myanmar. The ministry movement consisted of his background, education, calling from God to the mission field, missionary journey to India, and his missionary contribution to the people of Myanmar, especially for Christianity in Myanmar. It is true that "even cross-cultural missionaries struggle with the task of contextualization. At their best, most cross-cultural evangelists are not noted for their contextual successes."¹⁵

¹⁵ Ed Stetzer, *Planting Missional Churches* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2006), 31.

The studies on Esther 4:12-17 extended my biblical understanding upon Mordecai and Esther connection because, I saw that the biblical exegesis highlights Mordecai and Esther as the model of a cross-culture community. Specially, since they became a role model for American Myanmar Community in the United States. Mordecai gives care and counseling to Esther to gain a royal position. Mordecai represents the life of the first generation in the foreign land and one could see Esther as part of the second generation in a cross-cultural community. Mordecai and Esther stand together in the cross-cultural kingdom where there are difficulties, problems, crises, misunderstanding, jealousy, and challenges in their daily lives. They become successful leaders for the people of God in the Persian Empire.

I learned more about Korean liberation theology through the theological foundation. I am dealing with The Minjung Movement and its theology. It is a response by the minjung oppressed people against the Korean military dictatorship. Minjung Theology is a social-political theology seeking to reform unjust socio-political systems and structures. Liberation, social justice, and freedom are the hope of minjung oppressed people. The theological foundation is related to my current situation in Myanmar because the military took over the government authority on January 2021. So, the people in Myanmar are waiting and hoping for social-political liberation and freedom.

In my interdisciplinary foundations, I gained new insight on Dr. Ho Law's psychology of coaching, mentoring, and learning theory. This interdisciplinary research helps me to identify how a minister can be a coach, mentor, and counselor to a cross-cultural community. Many talented youths give up easily when hard times come in their life because coaching, mentoring, and learning are not offered to them in my community.

Therefore, the psychology of coaching, mentoring, and learning played an essential role in pastoral care and counseling. The studies are helpful to witness the lack of coaching, mentoring, and learning in my context.

Human nature has not changed, though the individual experiences as children, adolescents, and adults from one generation and one culture to another certainly have.¹⁶ Today, our world has become a multicultural society. As the result there are variety of challenging changes that are occurring in the American Myanmar Community. There are rejections and acceptances in the cross-cultural world. Culture is one of the foundations of counseling. “Culture is also multifaceted.”¹⁷ As missionaries must learn a language and a culture to communicate God’s message to another culture, we need servants of God on the other end, learning the language and culture in which God’s book was written.¹⁸

Therefore, the analysis of the project shows that biblical youth care and counseling is necessary to American Myanmar Community in my context. Therefore, my project on “Biblical Youth Care and Counseling to Cross Culture Among the American Myanmar Community strengthens my spiritual journey and ministry in the United States.

¹⁶ Mark A. Yarhouse and James N. Sells, *Family Therapies: A Comprehensive Christian Appraisal*, Second edition (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2017), 33.

¹⁷ Elemmont E. Vontress, *Counseling Across and Beyond Cultures: Exploring the Work of Clement C. Vontress in Clinical Practice* (London, UK: University of Oronto Press, 2010), 38.

¹⁸ Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), Logos-The Need of Culture.

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